

Terror
reigns in
Guatemala

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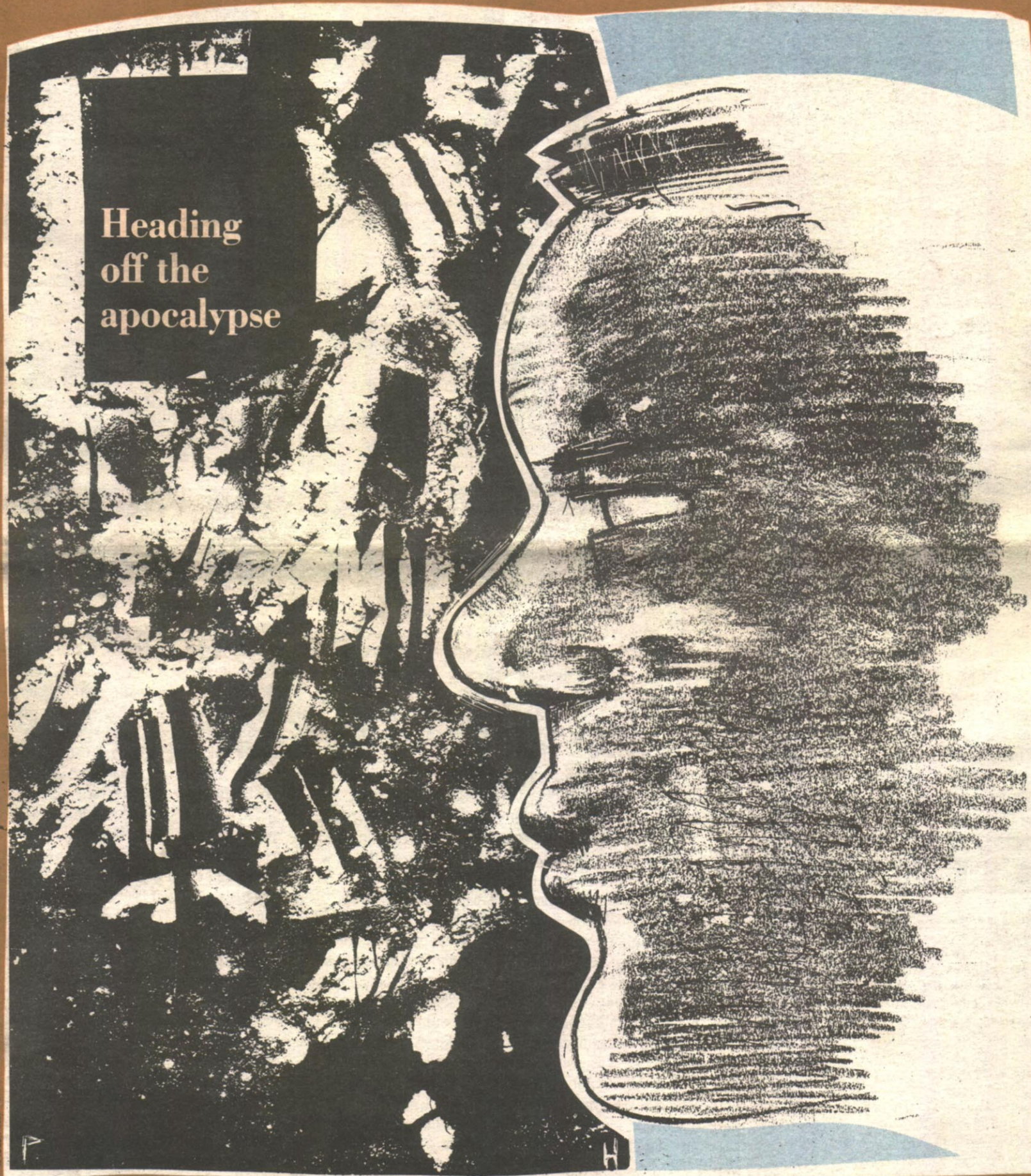
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BLACKS & DRUGS



Heading
off the
apocalypse

by Salim Muwakkil — page 7

The fire last time at Yellowstone heats the 'nature' debate

By David Moberg

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Along the slopes of Wyoming's Mt. Washburn, charred old lodgepole pines stand as lifeless reminders of the firestorms that engulfed 45 percent of the world's first national park a year ago. But a brilliant carpet of pink fireweed and blue-flowered lupines stretches across the charcoal-powder earth, flourishing as never before on the ash-enriched soil, in sunlight the trees previously obscured.

Across the park, at the edge of the Lower Geyser Basin, lies the carcass of an elk, probably a victim of a harsh winter and the loss of forage resulting from last year's drought and fire. A coyote, appreciating the easy meal, tugs at the dried flesh and skin left behind by other predators and scavengers.

The monster fires of 1988 may have left more than a half-million acres of Yellowstone's once-tree-covered hillsides black and gray for years to come, but they were hardly the disaster that some local politicians proclaimed at the time. The loss of the trees was an opportunity for many other plants and animals.

Nature's comeback is a reminder that "the resource at Yellowstone is not 20,000 elk, not a million lodgepole pines, not 200 grizzly bears. It's wildness and interaction according to natural laws," says David Simon of the National Parks and Conservation Association.

Nature answers: The nation's parks, our counterpart to Europe's great cathedrals, are shrines of great beauty when not reduced to tourism-industry adjuncts. Despite the setbacks of the Reagan era's unprecedentedly politicized management of parks and natural resources—a management hostile to wilderness and ecological principles—the parks' policy has shifted over the past quarter-century. Their mission is to preserve not just postcard-pretty scenes, but unencumbered and ever-changing wilderness. Yet they still must cater to a rapidly growing number of human visitors, many of whom see the parks as natural theme parks with built-in zoos.

The parks' dilemma reflects a universal problem: how can we abandon our inherited nature-conquering mentality and accept nature's processes? The need to live within an ecological framework we cannot completely control is constantly driven home by overflowing urban landfills, chemically overdependent farms and a global greenhouse effect. It's also the parks' main challenge.

The biggest problem that U.S. national parks face is not natural cataclysms, like last year's Yellowstone fire, to which the parks can readily adapt if their distinct ecosystems are still fairly intact. It is encroachment from various forces on the outside—smog from cities and power plants, obscuring the Grand Canyon; oil exploration, logging and real estate development on the outskirts of Yellowstone; farming, land drainage and urban sprawl near the Everglades.

Indeed, Yellowstone's fire is probably an inevitable part of its natural history, and one with potential long-term benefits. The prevailing scientific evidence is that Yellowstone's distinctive lodgepole pine forest endured a similar fire in the early 18th century. Large fires are very rare in young lodgepole forests. But after about 200 to 400 years the mature forest, with many dead or older trees providing fuel, and younger spruce and fir trees acting as fire ladders, becomes vulnerable to widespread fire, especially under drought conditions.

In recent decades park managers have recognized that fire is an important natural process, clearing the way for new and more varied growth of plants that mature forests crowd out. The fires create more edges between forest and meadow or brush, edges that support far more and varied wildlife than dense forest. Fire also opens the resinous cones of lodgepoles, releasing the seeds otherwise trapped within.

Park firefighters' policy in recent decades has been to extinguish fires started by humans but not those caused by lightning, which usually burned themselves out in days, or at most a few weeks, in Yellowstone. But in the summer of 1988, as the fires dragged on, firefighters tried to extinguish most of the big fires from their beginning. Some, however, were actually the result of backfires started to combat other fires, or were ignited outside the park. The conditions were perfect for an unstoppable conflagration. The Greater Yellowstone Postfire Ecological Assessment Workshop—a panel of academics—concluded that "regardless of manpower and equipment, suppression of fires in [areas containing] heavy fuels may be impossible when the weather is severe."

Rising from the ashes: But the fires set in motion a new round of growth—and provided unexpected benefits. Aspens will probably grow back more strongly, and there will be many more birds in the park. Many elk and bison, including weaker animals spared during previous mild winters, perished last winter (half of them at the hands of hunters outside the park). But the survivors had lush foraging this year and liked the winter warmth in the sun-absorbing blackened forests. And grizzly bears, already thought to be on the rebound, had extra carcasses to eat before and after hibernation. Yellowstone natural resource management specialist Stu Coleman said this meant the bears were likely to produce more young, and more easily feed their bigger cub crop in the spring. "The fires played very well for bear population," he said.

After a year of attempts to suppress all fires, the park service will soon return to a slightly modified version of its old natural-burn policy, Coleman said. Fire management plans will now take more into account drought and other weather conditions, a move some purists condemn. But according to Coleman, a pragmatic faction believes that the rules won't make much difference. "Lodgepole pines don't burn much until they're 250 years old, and then there's not much you can do to stop it," he said.

Despite scientific evidence backing park policy, there may still be a widespread belief that park managers goofed. Conservationists worry that the glare of bad publicity will slow projects such as the reintroduction of the wolf—exterminated in the '30s—to Yellowstone, or make park directors cautious about defending wilderness values.

"That's truly unfortunate," argues Wilderness Society northern Rockies representative Michael Scott. "At the center of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, the park is faced with significant choices for the future. Yellowstone is surrounded by six national forests that have produced management plans under political appointees of the Reagan administration, which promoted resource maximization—maximum roadbuilding, mining, timber harvest and oil and gas exploration. The potential exists for that ecosystem to unravel." Park representatives consequently must argue with other public agencies for their wilderness

values.

Within the next two months the Bridger-Teton forest southeast of Yellowstone is expected to announce a new management plan permitting oil and gas leasing on 95 percent of legally available land, right up to the borders of the Grand Teton and Yellowstone parks and throughout prime grizzly habitat as well. North of Yellowstone, the "new age" Church Universal and Triumphant is expanding development and interfering with wildlife's winter range. The church moved there in the early '80s after Reagan blocked Forest Service acquisition of the elk's critical winter grazing lands. And in the next couple of weeks the park system may allow a sawmill to use Yellowstone roads in an "emergency" to haul timber it is cutting in an adjacent public forest, despite legal prohibitions against such commercial activity in the park.

Northern Plains Sierra Club representative Larry Mehlhaff argues that policies regarding forests adjacent to Yellowstone are the "biggest threat" to the park at the moment because of the threat commercial activity in these areas poses to Yellowstone's ecosystem. Despite a new coordinating committee of park and Forest Service directors from the whole Yellowstone ecosystem, Forest Service policy often directly conflicts with park aims (for example, not protecting adjacent grizzly areas).

Loss leaders: Ironically, the Forest Service usually loses lots of money on its timber sales in the Yellowstone area (see *In These Times*, Sept. 13), but counts the roads it builds through previously roadless wilderness areas as

INSIDE STORY

a public benefit—though conservationists would argue that the roads should count in a permanent loss column. Besides, the forest product yield from the area is negligible nationally, Mehlhaff argues, and the limited local employment would in any case be more stable if lumber companies had practiced sustained-yield cutting over the years. Now the Wilderness Society is devising an alternative economic strategy for the region that is compatible with wilderness values.

Many Reagan appointees still occupy key park-related posts, and conservationists consider the two new Interior Department officials most responsible for park policy hard-line ideological conservatives with no national park experience. But some park and environmental group lobbyists still hope that Bush will be more sympathetic to parks, pointing to his decision to ask for more land-acquisition money than Reagan did. Bush's request—for less than half of what most groups say is needed—may simply represent a pragmatic accommodation with what Congress allocated last year despite Reagan's puny recommendation. Yet at the same time Bush officials have approved building an environmentally destructive jetty area off Cape Hatteras, N.C., that Reagan's crew had long delayed.

Congress is considering legislation to protect the park service from the most blatant political manipulation, and some environmentalists would like to revive legislation, twice passed by the House, requiring other federal agencies to manage their lands compatibly with park aims. Park advocates want greatly expanded appropriations to buy land, including \$2 billion for sites Congress has already approved. Big fights are possible over expanding the Everglades park and creating a southern California desert park. Another critical issue looms: how much Bureau of Land Management acreage will be designated as protected wilderness?

Bush's signals that he intends to be more environmentally sensitive cheer park defenders, but the administration has yet to clearly stake out its commitments. It's not enough to simply be less bad than Reagan when every national park is threatened by degradation of the land around it. "The Reagan years deferred everything," warns Steven Whitney, national parks program director for The Wilderness Society. "Now everything is coming due." □

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By Kevin Robinson

GUATEMALA CITY

A WAVE OF DEATH-SQUAD KIDNAPPINGS AND assassinations in Guatemala marks the largest increase in human rights violations here since President Vinicio Cerezo's civilian government took office in January 1986. The Cerezo administration claims it is under siege by extreme-right, clandestine groups that hope to submerge the nation in a spiraling political crisis that could pave the way for a new coup attempt.

A string of terrorist bomb and grenade attacks since July does in part appear to corroborate Cerezo's claims. But most independent groups here and international human rights organizations directly accuse security forces of heading a well-coordinated campaign to destroy the country's budding mass movement, with or without the consent of civilian authorities. Indeed, growing repression against virtually all center to left groups is terrorizing the population, threatening to completely destroy the nation's democratic opening.

Following the Cerezo administration's rise to power in 1986, which ended nearly 20 years of successive military governments, human rights abuses fell noticeably. Unions, peasant organizations and progressive groups began to organize openly again on a mass scale for the first time since 1980, when widespread repression forced most of those groups to demobilize or operate underground.

Workers and guerrillas: Last year alone some 50 new worker organizations and peasant associations emerged, although few obtained legal status, according to one prominent labor adviser here. Throughout 1988, unions carried out more than 100 strikes or work stoppages and about 100 protest marches, according to government estimates.

This year, workers' mobilizations grew even bolder. Between June and August, for example, some 70,000 civil servants, including all of the country's public school teachers, led a three-month strike for higher wages. The strike inspired the largest street demonstrations here since 1980, and constant clashes broke out between protestors and riot police after strikers repeatedly blocked highways and occupied public offices around the country.

Alongside this surge in labor activity and social mobilization, the Guatemalan guerrilla organizations, previously decimated by massive counterinsurgency drives from 1980 to 1984, also managed to reinstate activities on a wide scale, partially rebuilding their former social support network. The Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG), a coalition of the country's four main rebel organizations, now boasts of 3,500 armed combatants and a 35,000-strong civilian base of support, mostly in rural areas.

The URNG reports a total of 440 battles with government troops in the first five months of 1989, plus 45 attacks on army bases and outposts in half of the country's 22 provinces. Despite official denials, many guerrilla reports are corroborated by local press coverage of insurgent actions.

Alarmed by this rapid growth in mass organization—and especially the sharp jump in rebel activity and strength—dissident army officers, backed by right-wing politi-



Confrontation in the capital: striking Guatemalan teachers demonstrate in the face of repression.

Guatemalans face up to terror's rising tide

cians and businessmen, attempted a military coup on May 9. Although the overthrow attempt was crushed by army units based in the capital loyal to the government, more than 20 high-ranking and mid-level officers participated directly or indirectly in the revolt. Many of the officers had been implicated in a similar putsch attempt in 1988.

"The principal cause of discontent among officers is the guerrillas' strong re-emergence and the threat that the army stands to lose all it gained in the counterinsurgency campaigns of the early '80s," said one former intelligence officer who participated in the 1988 putsch and confidentially confessed to connections to the May 9 revolt.

Many army officials fear that Cerezo's Christian Democrat (CD) government is permeated by leftists who are either sympathetic to or maintain direct links with the URNG, using state resources to finance and promote the growth of left-oriented labor and peasant organizations. Even more disturbing to army commanders is the belief that Defense Minister Gen. Hector Gramajo and most of his loyal collaborators in the high command "sold out" to the CD, turning a deaf ear to complaints from their subordinates.

"Most officers are well aware that a lot of people who previously had connections with the subversives are now with the CD, and many directly blame Defense Minister Gramajo for weakening the army by rotating dissident officers to powerless administrative posts or by discharging them from the military," the former intelligence officer said. "The army is severely divided, and many officers hate General Gramajo even more than President Cerezo."

Given the failure of the May 9 rebellion, officials now accuse disaffected officers of unleashing a "terror campaign" around the country to push the population to lose faith in the political opening, thereby destabiliz-

ing the Cerezo government and paving the way for a new coup attempt.

Disgruntled officers? Since mid-July, a string of bomb explosions throughout Guatemala City damaged about two dozen buildings and vehicles and injured more than 20 innocent bystanders, while another 100-odd bomb threats against public offices and commercial centers sowed panic among city residents. On at least three separate occasions, right-wing commandos terrorized pedestrians by indiscriminately lobbing grenades at crowded bus stops and shopping centers as they calmly cruised the capital's downtown areas.

"Clearly, those responsible for the bomb attacks are the same groups who want to reinstate a hard-line military government, and many of those involved may be the same people who participated in past coup attempts," Cerezo said in a press conference here September 12.

Reported political assassinations and abductions climbed to 91 in July and August, according to one count.

In fact, on September 15 police caught two men in the capital carrying war materiel in their cars who later confessed to planning and executing terrorist acts under the orders of Lionel Sisniega, head of the ultraconservative Anti-Communist Unification Party who allegedly participated in past coup conspiracies. Sisniega is now in hiding, but police discovered grenades and machine guns in his home, and the army immediately sent Sisniega's son, a captain in Guatemala's

presidential guard, off packing to Venezuela as military attache.

Few doubt then that uncontrollable, extreme-right groups are behind many of the bombings, as Cerezo claims. But alongside these indiscriminate terrorist attacks is a new wave of political assassinations, kidnappings and death threats targeting liberal and progressive groups around the nation, which many suspect is a well-calculated campaign of repression directly headed by the country's security forces, with or without the consent of Cerezo or Gramajo.

While death squads killed or kidnapped 237 people throughout the first six months of this year, the number of political assassinations and abductions reported climbed to 91 in July and August alone, according to one local conservative count. This month the abuses appear to be growing even worse. In less than 24 hours on September 13, death squads massacred 15 people in the western provinces of Quezaltenango and San Marcos, both heavy army-guerrilla "conflict areas," dumping many of the victims' mutilated bodies along roadsides in those regions.

Following are some of the most noteworthy cases of human rights abuses since June:

In June and July hit squads kidnapped four union leaders, including a labor organizer at a local branch of the Granai and Townsend Bank, plus a member of the powerful Coca-Cola factory union in Guatemala City. Most workers' federations here say an unprecedented stream of death threats against their leaders and members began in July and continues unabated.

In July and August hit squads kidnapped two members of the Mutual Support Group for the Families of the Disappeared (GAM). And on August 16 a powerful bomb ripped through GAM's offices in the capital, while another explosion partially destroyed the nearby residence of the International Peace Brigades, a foreign pacifist organization that collaborates with GAM.

In August constant death threats forced the entire editorial staff of the new liberal newsweekly *Porque* to resign after a hit squad murdered one of the magazine's founders. At least five other journalists, two of

Continued on page 10

By Joel Bleifuss

Private spies

Are you an environmentalist, animal rights advocate, peace activist or other agent for social change? Is your political activity threatening the profit margin of a certain corporation or particular industry? If the answer is yes to any one of these questions, perhaps you are now being tracked by Mongoven, Biscoe and Duchin, or one of the 10 to 15 other surveillance companies in the U.S. who make it their business to know your business. Robert Duchin described his Washington, D.C.-based company to Diane Alters of the *Boston Globe* this way: "We're a small consulting firm, a public affairs firm. We monitor issues, specifically environmental issues, biotechnology and other areas ... solid wastes and hazardous wastes. We track the issues, we track the players in the industry, both individuals and groups." Duchin and his partners then contact a company such as a waste-management multinational and offer their services. "We're here all the time with a data base of information," says Duchin. For about \$3,500 a month, researchers at Mongoven, Biscoe and Duchin will analyze and report on groups or movements that threaten their clients. Duchin says his group doesn't send out spies and infiltrate. That is not ethical. Perceptions International of Stratford, Conn., does. One of its spies is Mary Lou Sapone. She infiltrated a Norwalk, Conn., animal rights organization. Once inside the group she befriended a mentally unstable woman who was later arrested and charged with attempted murder. The woman had planted a bomb in the parking lot of U.S. Surgical Corporation, a company that demonstrates use of their surgical tables on anesthetized dogs. Private police services operate on a relatively free rein, unhindered by the legal constraints that keep public police forces in line. As Gary Marx, a sociologist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, told the *Boston Globe*, "We've always thought of Big Brother in government as a threat to liberty, but the framers of the Constitution didn't pay much attention to private groups because there weren't large corporations at the time. ... With the rise of multinationals, there is a powerful third force. ... I think in terms of the coming struggles over individual liberty, we're going to pay more attention to private-sector questions."

Video tears

Warren Berger writes in the monthly magazine, *Corporate Video Decisions*: "Recent history has shown that no crisis is too large or too urgent for video to address. ... Few companies have had employee morale shaken as badly as Union Carbide in 1984. ... The Bhopal nightmare did more than just damage Union Carbide's employee morale; it had a devastating short-term impact on the firm's corporate standing as well. To combat a negative press blitz, Union Carbide used video to aid in communications with the outside world. ... Union Carbide succeeded in putting its own 'spin' on some of the news coverage of its crisis. ... Union Carbide officials say they learned early on in the crisis that there was no point in trying to put a good face on the disaster—it was far better to be honest, and even starkly emotional."

We are not amused

In August the Cuban Communist Party banned two foreign publications that promote "shameful and nihilistic attitudes"—the weekly *Moscow News* and the monthly *Sputnik*. The party announced the censorship in its daily newspaper *Granma* this way: "We would be denying the truth if we said that these readings have not influenced some people in our country. It is painful to admit that there have been those who wasted their time looking for examples here that can in some way be associated with experiences in the Soviet Union. Some people, in order to imitate Soviet solutions, are trying to say that we have committed errors—errors that we have in fact avoided. We have made our own errors, and they are precisely what we are now rectifying. ... Publications such as these do not speak to our reality and interests, they are not for us."

Buried news and Jews

"Human rights and the media" is the subject covered in a special report in *Extra!*, the publication by the media watch group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting. The 64-page study examines the dominant media's selective coverage of human rights abuses. From Afghanistan to Nicaragua, from China to Guatemala, the reader is treated to examples of how time and again the coverage

The way it wOz and iz

The 50th anniversary of the film "The Wizard of Oz" is introducing a new generation to the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion, the Scarecrow, the Witch and the Wizard himself. So what better time to recount the story as it originally was intended—a political allegory about grass-roots protest, with the Tin Woodsman as the industrial worker, the Scarecrow as the struggling farmer and the Wizard as the president who is powerful only as long as he succeeds in deceiving the people.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz was written by Lyman Frank Baum in 1900, at the time of the collapse of the Populist movement. The Populist Party of Midwestern farmers, in alliance with some urban workers, had challenged the banks, railroads and other economic interests that squeezed farmers through low prices, high freight rates and continued indebtedness.

The Populists advocated government ownership of the railroad, telephone and telegraph industries. They also wanted to coin silver in order to undermine the gold standard. Their movement grew during the 1892 depression, the worst in U.S. history until then, as farm prices sank to new lows and unemployment was widespread.

In 1894, Jacob S. Coxey, a Populist lumber dealer from Massillon, Ohio, led a mass march of unemployed workers to Washington to demand a federal works program. That same year President Grover Cleveland called in federal troops to put down the nationwide Pullman strike—at



that time the largest strike in American history. As the Populists saw things, the monopolies were growing richer, the workers and farmers ever poorer.

In the 1894 congressional elections the Populist party got almost 40 percent of the vote. It looked forward to winning the presidency—and the silver standard—in 1896.

Baum viewed these events in both rural South Dakota, where he edited a local weekly, and in urban Chicago, where he wrote *Oz*. He mourned the destruction of the fragile alliance between the Midwestern farmers (the Scarecrow) and the urban industrial workers (the Tin Woodsman). Along with William Jennings Bryan (the Cowardly Lion, with a roar but little else), they had been taken down the yellow brick road (the gold standard) that led nowhere. Each journeyed to Emerald City seeking favors from the Wizard of Oz (the President). Dorothy, the symbol of Everyman, went along with them, innocent enough to see the truth before the others.

Along the way they meet the

Wicked Witch of the East (the Banks) who, Baum tells us, had kept the little Munchkin people "in bondage for many years, making them slave for her night and day." She had also put a spell on the Tin Woodsman, once an independent and hardworking man, so that each time he swung his axe, it chopped off a different part of his body. Lacking another trade, he "worked harder than ever," becoming like a machine, incapable of love, yearning for a heart. Another witch, the Wicked Witch of the West, symbolizes the large industrial corporations.

Like Coxey's Army, the small group heads toward Emerald City, where the Wizard rules from behind a papier-mâché facade. (Oz is the abbreviation for ounce, the standard measure for gold.) Like all good politicians, the Wizard can be all things to all people. Dorothy sees him as an enormous head. The Scarecrow sees a gossamer fairy. The Woodsman sees an awful beast, the Cowardly Lion "a ball of fire, so fierce and glowing he could scarcely bear to gaze upon it."

But later when they confront the Wizard directly, they see he is nothing more than "a little man, with a bald head and a wrinkled face."

"I have been making believe," the Wizard confesses. "I'm just a common man." But the Scarecrow adds, "You're more than that...you're a humbug." This was Baum's ultimate and timeless message. The powers that be survive by deception. Only people's ignorance allows the powerful to manipulate and control them.

—Peter Dreier

A version of this story was originally distributed by Pacific News Service.

Chile: on the road to death-squad democracy

On September 5, Jacar Neghme, a Chilean leftist leader, was assassinated by a group calling itself the "11th of September Front"—namesake of the date the military overthrew the elected government of Salvador Allende and seized power. Several months ago, during a visit to Chile, I had met with numerous Chilean opposition leaders, including Neghme.

He was a bright, well-read young man in his late 20s, eager to discuss and exchange ideas about the political transition that Chile was undergoing. He and his supporters in the Left Revolutionary Movement had decided to abandon armed resistance to the Pinochet dictatorship and join in the electoral process. I asked him if there were not great risks in going public, since most military and police officials overseeing the transition and beyond were the same people responsible for gross human rights violations. He replied there was indeed a risk, but that it was worth taking. The growth of popular support and the conquest of democratic space would, he be-

lieved, decrease the risks of military repression. He felt so strongly about the need to oust Pinochet that he was willing to bury basic political differences and support the center-right Christian Democratic candidate Patricio Aylwin. Neghme ran those risks for democracy and paid the price.

The killing of Neghme has a larger significance: it is a message from Pinochet and the military that the electoral process must follow the narrow rules laid down by the dictatorship, or else. The official explanation that the assassination was carried out by "unknown assailants" is not credible. The very name of the death squad clearly identifies it with Pinochet and the armed forces. Similar killings of Pinochet critics, both in Chile and abroad, are known to have the approval of high-ranking government officials. The assailants acted with impunity. Their victim was shot on the Alameda, Santiago's main avenue. The investigation is only perfunctory. Pinochet, rejecting opposition demands for a special prosecutor, put the matter in the hands of an attorney general loyal to the military who has come up with the predictable "no leads" finding.

The assassination, which occurred as Chile prepares for the De-

cember 14 national election, the first in 16 years, has ominous implications for the political transition. The paramilitary groups' threat to "execute other leftist leaders" is an attempt to impose constraints and conditions on future political activity and agendas and to define who can and cannot participate in political life. Two weeks before the killing, in a speech to the armed forces, Pinochet further reinforced the independent role that the military will play under any civilian regime. He set eight conditions, including tenure for all current commanders in chief, impunity for all military officials accused of human rights violations, civilian non-interference in matters of national security (as defined by the military) and the prohibition of any party advocating "class struggle." He concluded with the overt threat to back these "conditions" up with the full force of the military, particularly if any member of the armed forces is accused of human rights violations.

In the months following the regime's defeat in the plebiscite and the vote on constitutional reforms, the two principal leaders, Pinochet and Christian Democratic leader Aylwin, have been negotiating the transition from an authoritarian to

a democratic regime. But as events unfold, it appears that they have very different conceptions of democracy. Pinochet's version emphasizes preserving both the military's pre-eminence and the socio-economic status quo. In this democracy, violations of the human rights of social activists accompany restricted party competition, much like the death-squad democracies of Guatemala and El Salvador.

The other version, the one envisioned by most Chileans, is a democracy based on popular sovereignty, without a tutelary military, a democracy that applies the law of the land to all citizens, even military chieftains. In this regard, the crucial question is whether the armed forces will be allowed impunity. For Chile that answer must be no. Not only is that response morally correct and just for the families of the vic-

tims but, more importantly, unless the torturers and assassins in the military and police are tried in a court of law, recurring repression, the activation of the paramilitary death squads or even a new military coup become highly probable events. It is a choice that the likely victorious Christian Democrat Aylwin will have to face immediately after the elections.

—James Petras

Machine broken in New Haven

NEW HAVEN, CONN.—On September it happened in New York, and it happened 70 miles to the north in New Haven: Democratic voters elected a black man in a mayoral primary for the first time in the city's history.

Like New York City's David Dinkins, New Haven's John Daniels ran a campaign of "inclusion" in a race-torn city. Like Dinkins, he needed a historic turnout from black neighborhoods, plus a significant white vote. He got it, thanks to a massive pulling operation that included progressive unions and young blacks who were entering the electoral process for the first time. Daniels captured 59 percent of the vote to defeat a machine-sponsored candidate, 39-year-old John DeStefano Jr., a former city bureaucrat. Democrats outnumber Republicans 10 to one in New Haven, and Daniels is pretty much assured victory in November.

Daniels is a product of New Haven's Democratic machine, not reform politics. He rose through the ranks over 20 years as an alderman and state senator. For years he bided his time, was handed positions, loyally backed machine candidates, met weekly with white powerbrokers to divide up black patronage.

New Haven's progressives hope Daniels will overhaul local government out of debt to the people who elected him—injecting neighborhood concerns and grass-roots organizing into the decision-making process. Already the campaign pushed Daniels to the left on issues like tax breaks to developers and free needle exchanges for addicts in danger of contracting AIDS. "This is just the beginning for young people in this city," suggested Daniels' backer Lisa Sullivan, of the local NAACP Youth Council. "There's a lot of things we want changed."

Daniels' victory marks the culmination of the gradual erosion of New Haven's patronage-based Democratic machine. Jesse Jackson won the city in the 1988 Democratic presidential primary even though the machine backed Michael Dukakis. That campaign saw young black activists register hundreds of new voters. For the first time in years, the left worked together with blacks and Hispanics on a city campaign. Inspired by Jackson, younger blacks put the heat on established black politicians for, in their view, acquiescing to a white-dominated power structure.



Mayoral candidate John Daniels celebrates.

Daniels won the old-fashioned way, beating the party machine at its own game: turning out the votes on election day.

Hundreds of volunteers poured onto city streets for Daniels. They pulled voters out of isolated housing projects who had last been to the polls maybe a decade ago—if at all.

One particularly dramatic example of the black community's sudden turnaround in political organization was the 20th Ward, an all-black enclave in the Newhallville neighborhood. For decades that ward has produced voter turnouts among the lowest in town. Not coincidentally, it has also received the lowest share of public services. But that ward turned out the highest vote in the September 12 primary—1,177 votes for Daniels, 72 for his opponent.

The machine had planted the first seeds of organization in that ward two years ago to oust a nettlesome alderman. Little did it know that Jo Ann Pearson, the woman it backed to replace that alderman, would turn out to be a fearsome organizer and independent spirit. She supported Daniels. And in meeting after meeting in her kitchen, she and others

like her in the ward collected index cards on all voters, registered new voters and set up a smooth election day operation.

Pearson tapped into the frustrations of other women in her neighborhood—women in their 30s and 40s and 50s—who had grown tired both of the neglect from downtown government and the empty noises made by the men who claimed to be neighborhood leaders. "I've come to realize the vote is so powerful," said one new ward worker, 39-year-old Linda DuBose, as she arrived to drive elderly voters to the polls. "The only way we're going to get anything is to come together."

The campaign was an education of sorts for New Haven's left, who rarely in the past had spent their political energy on such mundane details as phone-banking and driving voters to the polls. Instead, they abdicated such tasks to the machine—and in the process abdicated political power. Now it should have at least some influence as New Haven, like other cities devastated by the Reagan years and white flight, tackles the tough issues of our times.

—Paul Bass

of human rights abuses is shaped to fit within the framework of U.S. national policy. But one of *Extra's* most fascinating examples of such sins of omission dates from the noble war that has, in a flood of nostalgic ink, just celebrated its 50th anniversary. It is a commonly held truth that the American people did not have full news of what the Nazis had done to the Jews until the Allied soldiers liberated the German concentration camps in 1945. Not so. Deborah E. Lipstadt writes that Hitler's attempt to exterminate European Jewry was not a secret; it was just the most poorly covered news story of the '40s. She provides the following examples. On Oct. 30, 1941, the *New York Times* reported in a back-page article: "More Berlin Jews Shipped to Poland; Sent Away in Freight Cars—48,000 Uprooted in Prague." And, on Nov. 13, 1941, the *New York Journal American* ran a story titled, "25,000 Jews Killed in Odessa." Those five-digit figures became six, then seven. In June 1942 the Jewish Bund in Warsaw and the Polish government-in-exile told the world that Hitler was systematically slaughtering European Jews. They provided a list of cities where the Jewish population had disappeared. They reported that thousands of people were being killed in mobile "gas chambers." These revelations drew faint media response. On June 26, 1942, the *Seattle Times* reported on "the systemic extermination of the Jewish population" in a story on page 30 under the headline, "700,000 Jews Reported Slain." On June 27, 1942, the *New York Times* ran an 18-line article that mentioned gas chambers, but not the policy of organized slaughter. On June 27, 1942, the *Chicago Tribune* ran a 12-line story on page 6 under the headline, "Estimate One Million Jews Died—Victims of Nazis." Nothing much had changed two years later when there was absolutely no doubt about what was transpiring in Europe. On Feb. 18, 1944, the *New York Times* reported on page 7 in a 32-line story that Holland's 180,000 Jews had been "completely wiped out."

Nixon and the 1980 hostage crisis

A new chapter has been added to the ongoing investigation into the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign's secret arms deal with Iran to have the 52 American hostages held until after the November 1980 election. Simon O'Dwyer-Russell of London's *Sunday Telegraph* reported last week that in July of that year former President Richard Nixon tried to organize a second mission to rescue the hostages held in Iran, using British ex-servicemen and helicopter pilots. Nixon is alleged to have met with Alan Bristow, head of Bristow Helicopters, and several ex-SAS officers who were working for private security firms to discuss the possibilities for such an attempt. "Nixon was absolutely serious," said Bristow. And one of the men involved in planning the mission said, "Mr. Nixon was certain that President Carter's shame over [his failed April 26, 1980, rescue attempt] would ensure that he would not try again before the election. Nixon kept repeating that something had to be done." A spokesman for the former president said, "We will neither confirm nor deny this story." Simon reports that "security sources" have said that "the second strike was thought up by the Republican Party which feared that, if elected in November 1980, their presidential candidate, Mr. Ronald Reagan, would inherit the hostage problem." The *Sunday Telegraph* did not mention that the Republican Party also feared that Reagan would not be elected if Carter managed to get the hostages released prior to the election.

The price of freedom

Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, is an admirer of Martin Luther King Jr. The *Washington Post's* Gwen Ifill reports that last month he told the National Association of Black Journalists that peace can only be accomplished through continued military strength. Quoting King, Powell said, "Freedom has always been an expensive thing."

News clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes, raw gossip—send them all to "In Short," *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60647. Include your address and phone number.

By David Moberg

CHICAGO

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM, BUY 'EM, PILOTS AT United Air Lines reasoned after years of conflict with management over the direction of the 68,000-worker corporation. Now they have their chance. And if their \$6.8 billion bid to form the nation's largest employee-owned corporation succeeds despite its big debt burden, worker ownership will get a mammoth boost.

After a bruising 1985 strike, the pilots began talking about buying the airline as a way of wresting control from what they saw as hostile, misguided managers. As United Chairman Richard Ferris turned the company into Allegis Corp., an integrated airline, hotel and rental car company, the pilots became even more convinced that Ferris was shortchanging the core airline business—and their job futures—for the sake of a dubious dream.

So in 1987 they made a formal \$4.5 billion bid for the company. The offer came close to consummation, but Allegis directors reversed Ferris's grandiose plans, provoking his resignation, and the pilots' bid was not accepted. Later, pilots upped the ante, but new Chairman Steven Wolf resisted their offer while bargaining hard on new contracts with both pilots and flight attendants. Also, the biggest union at United—the Machinists—had negotiated contractual roadblocks to any buyout. But the courts overturned those barriers last summer. Then in early August, billionaire oil tycoon Marvin Davis began his attempt to take over United. Wolf, who was likely to profit handsomely from his United stock options in any takeover, had earlier resisted proposals from the Machinists to set up an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) as a takeover barrier. Although the Machinists have little enthusiasm for employee ownership, they were primarily concerned about the pressures on employees that come with the huge debt incurred in most takeovers, including management-employee leveraged buyouts.

Although other potential buyers were rumored and were even pursued by the Machinists, eventually the choice came down to Davis offering \$275 a share and the offer by the pilots, top management and British Airways for \$300 a share. Since the pilots made it clear that they would offer concessions for their own buyout but not to any outsider, and since there are tax advantages for ESOPs, their proposal had a clear edge. On September 15 United's board accepted it, although Davis still hovers in the wings if the employee bid falters.

The employee-management team will ultimately pay UAL Corp. about \$8.2 billion for the airline. They'll borrow \$7.2 billion, probably without a huge interest premium because of ESOP tax breaks for lenders. Pilots will put up \$200 million equity out of one of their two pension funds, and British Airways will invest \$750 million.

The seven-year switch: Pilots have also agreed to concessions in a seven-year, no-strike contract that will include work-rule changes worth about \$53 million a year. Also, the pilots will take a 10 percent pay cut—but only after the lower-paid "B" scale is eliminated and lower-seniority pilots' wages are raised.

Although the pilots are paying far more than the \$90 a share they offered more than two years ago, United is now more profitable.

If you can't beat 'em, buy 'em, say UAL pilots

So the concessions are less onerous. Two years ago, for example, pilots anticipated 25 percent pay cuts. The buyout, however, gets shaky if there is a renewed fare war, a deep recession or other major turmoil. But pilot spokesman Capt. James Damron argues, "If this country undergoes a recession, my company will suffer whether I own it or not. At least I will be able to analyze it much better. I will know the information is accurate and complete, and I will take actions to make my company more competitive."

LABOR

To the skeptics, the pilots basically argue that one way or another, United was going to be sold with a high level of debt. There would undoubtedly be pressures for concessions. So why not make those concessions in the form of an investment and own the company? "If Marvin Davis bought it," Damron said, "he would bludgeon me to pay for him. Pilots are not about to pay for somebody else's ownership."

Employees would own 75 percent of the new company, British Air 15 percent and top management 10 percent—an extraordinarily good deal for their \$15 million investment. Employees would have three out of 15 directorships, with eight independent directors selected by managers, employees and financiers. A unique feature of the agreement, according to Corey Rosen, director of the National Center for Employee Ownership, is that all major strategic decisions would require support of two of the three employee directors. In the case of a board deadlock, the decision would go to stockholders, three-fourths of whom would be employees. Even without this veto power, the agreement matched the governance features of many of the better big ESOPs.

But despite provisions for new labor-management committees on training and captains' authority, there are few provisions so far for any dramatic changes in work organization. As potential owners, Damron says, the pilots want to keep the company committed to its long-term plan for growth and investment, and not significantly change the workplace or influence day-to-day management.

Although the deal would give United some immediate savings, Rutgers University man-

agement professor Joseph Blasi, author of *Employee Ownership: Revolution or Rip-off*, argues that employee-owned United would need continuous savings improvements. And that would require not just ownership, but wide-ranging participation by workers at all levels.

Easing tensions: That participation, however, is not guaranteed. First, Rosen argues, "it would work a lot better if they can get the other unions to participate, not just in ownership but in every other way they can." But the machinists' and pilots' union leaders have a history of personal tensions as well as philosophical differences. Machinists don't want a pilot-dominated deal. For their part, pilots insist they want the machinists and flight attendants as equal partners on the board. Also, both flight attendants and the ground crews are especially concerned about job security (which the pilots won in their new contract). Since they make far less than the pilots, many of whom make more than \$100,000 a year, the flight attendants and ground crews also argue that they can't invest as much or make equivalent concessions.

The Machinists, whose contract is up for renewal November 1, are likely to play hardball during negotiations but are more critical of the terms rather than the principle

The United Air Lines buyout proposal gives employee ownership a major boost.

of employee ownership. The flight attendants, who are still negotiating a contract that has been open for two years, seem more sympathetic to employee ownership, yet share some of the Machinists' reservations. Like Rosen and Blasi, they realize that the unions can't succeed if they aren't more united.

"If you're looking at employee ownership, how in God's name do you make it work if the unions are not all there?" asks United flight attendant vice president Carol Holmes. "Utopia doesn't just happen." For even something short of utopia, United's Wolf will have to abandon his autocratic style, and the

unions will have to stop their infighting.

For many years employees owned mainly small firms, primarily ones that had previously been privately held. Employee ownership was widely publicized when it was used as a last-ditch effort to avert plant closings, but statistically such buyouts represented a small fraction of the 9,500 ESOPs now employing 10 million workers. In the past few years increasing numbers of large and publicly held firms have started ESOPs—300 in the last two and a half years. Often they were initiated to prevent potential hostile takeovers or to buy corporate divisions spun off in corporate restructuring. In some cases workers have been given little control and management may have benefited disproportionately, but in the most successful, workers have a strong voice and majority ownership.

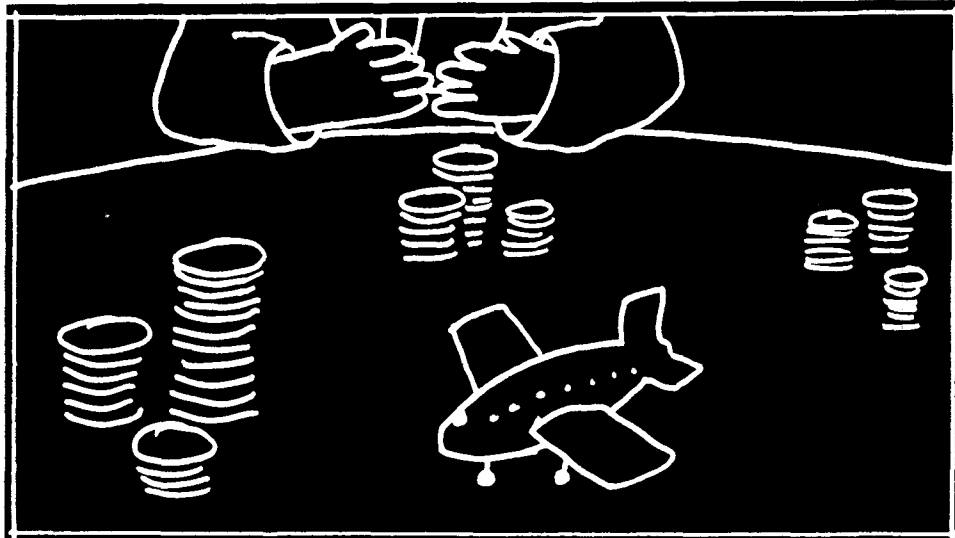
There have been at least eight major ESOPs in the airline industry. Eastern's was the biggest, and it was moderately successful until undermined by management, then sold to Frank Lorenzo. At Republic and Western, the ESOP plans represented successful bridges for failing airlines that were later bought out. Employee stockholders not only made money on their stock but, more importantly, preserved their jobs, Rosen says.

A new deal: But the United deal "is very different from almost anything unions have done," Rosen argues. It is a very big, healthy company. Contrary to prevailing myths, he says, the prominent union role hasn't made it difficult to get financing on reasonably good terms. Unions also have an advantage because they can offer concessions to themselves as owners. But they can use ownership as a bargaining chip: "Management will pay more attention to union demands if they say, 'If we can't work with you, we'll buy the company and replace you,'" says Rosen. That argument strongly appeals to flight attendant Holmes, who discovered in 1985 that "the right to strike is not the ultimate way to control your destiny."

Blasi believes that employee-owned United could provide a "model for resolving the ownership instability and cost-containment issues, as well as labor-management tension in the airline industry." But he says that there's a message for unions—and management—in other industries as well. "If they expect the takeover disease to reach their company, then it makes more sense for them to mount a labor-management buyout before the stock gets bid up to an unreasonable level. It would have been nicer [for the United workers] to have had a deal at \$200 a share. This is an argument for prophylactic ESOPs."

Despite the potential pitfalls of a worker-owned United, the pilots at least are enthusiastic. "This is a pivotal event in American social and economic history," Damron says. "American business and its relationship to those who produce goods and services has made a huge turn in the road, such a sharp turn that a lot of people will fall off the truck. The country will never be the same again. I cannot find words to describe the optimism. It will have a profound effect on the American and world economy. I think it's the essential ingredient in making America a world competitor."

Even if the pilots are overly optimistic, employee ownership has gained a new legitimacy. But it's an open question whether unions and workers can act with enough initiative to make sure they get the maximum potential benefits. □



By Salim Muwakkil

WHEN REV. JESSE JACKSON LAUNCHED his second presidential campaign two years ago at the National Rainbow Coalition (NRC) convention in Raleigh, N.C., his announcement speech echoed the major themes of his first campaign: he denounced the "economic violence" of corporate America and he scolded the country for its "guided missiles" and misguided leadership." The true challenge of the U.S., Jackson intoned, was "to find economic common ground." The multiracial audience, most of whom were NRC members, provided a continuous ovation as their candidate delivered the party line.

But when Jackson unexpectedly added, "we must declare a war on drugs" and urged more military resources be devoted for that purpose, the applause became erratic. Left-liberal Rainbow members were stunned by what seemed to be Jackson's concession to right-wing moralism. But local blacks attracted to the Raleigh Civic Center by Jackson's celebrity—and many black NRC members as well—applauded his drug-war references with even greater intensity.

Debate about the drug-abuse problem—like discussions about issues of feminism and homosexual rights—exposes a cultural divide between black and white activists. In general, black activists tend to be less concerned with safeguarding the civil liberties and other constitutional privileges of alleged drug offenders than are their white counterparts.

African-American organizers also are less willing to adopt so-called "lesser evil" solutions to the problem. For example, leaders of New York's black community were almost unanimously opposed to a proposal that was designed to slow the spread of AIDS among intravenous drug users by supplying them with clean needles. The city's black leadership collectively denounced the plan as an implicit endorsement of drug use and, since most of New York's addicts are black or Hispanic, subtly racist. Arguments favoring the decriminalization of drugs also are much less popular in black-activist circles than among left-liberal whites.

This divergence in outlook arises primarily from the varying roots of white and black activism: the white left was spawned in a medium of secular rationalism, while black activism is mostly church-born. Thus African-American leaders will often stress the moral component of an issue even while the left dismisses moral strictures as needless cultural baggage. But there are other differences as well.

A unique vulnerability: "We have to understand that black children are socialized by this nation to have low self-esteem," explains Dr. Carl Bell, director of the Community Mental Health Council in Chicago. "And people with low self-esteem are pushovers for the false esteem that drugs provide." This self-perpetuating cycle has rendered the African-American community especially vulnerable to the ravages of drugs, Bell says.

His logic is used to fuel the arguments of those who insist that any attempt to destigmatize drug use will send the wrong message to those most vulnerable and serve to exacerbate the abuse problem in the African-American community. Some theorists extend it further, charging that the government—which is aware of the same connection between low self-esteem and drug use cited by Bell—is conspiring with white su-

Drugs as a life(style) and death issue

premacist forces to commit genocide. By systematically denying black youths the social affirmation needed to build a healthy self-image, they argue, this society blazed the trail for the drug invasion of black America.

It's not just the radical fringe hurling such charges. In a recent *Chicago Defender* interview, Illinois State Rep. Monique Davis (D-Chicago) charged that the infestation of crack cocaine in the black community is tan-

BLACK AMERICA

tamount to "chemical warfare." Davis said that seemingly out of nowhere, "this drug has hit our streets in large quantities, and it has been made cheap and deadly, and there is something in it that is destroying the moral fiber of our community." Although Davis neglected to identify the perpetrators of this chemical warfare, her constituents got the point.

Most responsible black leaders discount the argument that the crack crisis was provoked by a white conspiracy to wipe out African-Americans, but they cast the problem in equally apocalyptic terms. In San Francisco, for example, the Glide Memorial United Methodist Church, headed by longtime activist Rev. Cecil Williams, organized a conference on the Black Family Community and Crack Cocaine with the sobering theme "the death of a race."

Williams, widely respected for his unvarying commitment to progressive causes over the years, said he watched the crack invasion destroy countless lives—"even entire communities"—and decided to launch an all-out strategy to counter the drug's devastation. "Not just our lives, but our very survival as

a race is at stake."

Since unemployment among black youth under 20 has been hovering in the 35 percent range since the mid '70s—and is much higher in many inner-city neighborhoods—a job in the underground drug economy is for many a means of survival. According to research conducted by the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, the illegal drug industry generates at least \$150 billion a year, and black America contributes inordinately to this total. Conservative estimates place the black share in the \$16 billion to \$20 billion range.

"There is no way of knowing the exact amount of money generated by the drug trade within the African-American community," says Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY), chairman of the Select Committee. "But we do know that drug abuse among blacks is disproportionately high. The figure could easily be much higher than \$20 billion."

Safety net: According to a recently published study by sociologist Terry Williams, who spent four years studying a group of drug-dealing teenagers, the drug trade often attracts some of the best and the brightest in the inner city. "Many teenagers are drawn

Alienated from the expectations that define mainstream America, many inner-city youths base their lives on the vagaries and imperatives of the drug economy.

to work in the cocaine trade simply because they want jobs, full time or even as casual labor," Williams writes in his book titled *Cocaine Kids*. "The drug business is a 'safety net' of sorts, a place where it is always possible to make a few dollars."

"Money and drugs are the obvious immediate rewards," he adds. "But there is another strong motivating force, and that is the desire to show family and friends that they can succeed at something...and they saw no chance to find a well-paying job with career possibilities." Living in society's outer margins, thoroughly alienated from the constellation of values and expectations that define mainstream America, many inner-city youths are structuring their entire lives on the vagaries and imperatives of the underground drug economy.

Despite the undeniable fact that the drug crisis is driven in part by motives purely economic, most black leaders resist proposing economic solutions. One glaring exception is Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke, who is virtually alone among black leaders in advocating drug decriminalization as a way out.

"Our current drug laws not only are not helping us win the war on drugs, they're helping us lose the war on drugs," Schmoke said in an interview in the August 1989 issue of *Ebony* magazine. "This is true for at least three reasons. First, we are wasting billions of dollars on law enforcement that could be more effectively used for education, treatment and prevention."

"Second, a law enforcement approach to drugs," continued Schmoke, "simply raises the black-market price of drugs, making drug trafficking a more attractive business for criminals. Third, because the money to be made from selling drugs is a lure to poor children, we are at risk of losing a large share of an entire generation of young people to drug abuse, incarceration and poverty."

While this position has yet to catch on with black organizers, many more are willing to discuss the pros and cons of Schmoke's argument than in the past, when it was dismissed out of hand. Ironically, this new readiness to entertain alternatives to conventional wisdom is being fed by a widespread distaste for the Bush administration's recently announced drug war. The Bush initiative, which was designed by National Drug Control Policy Director William Bennett, emphasizes law enforcement with a new stress on punishing the casual user. Most black leaders have criticized the new initiative as totally inadequate to the task. Generally, they have charged that the plan pays too little attention to prevention and education. What's more, increased reports of police brutality in inner-city neighborhoods across the country have alerted black leaders to the dangers of drug-war hysteria.

The crafty Bennett has sought to aggravate the cultural differences between black leaders and their liberal political allies by focusing on the special devastation drugs have wreaked in many of the country's African-American communities. He is especially derisive of arguments advocating drug decriminalization, sentiments he shares with Rangel.

But by championing a plan that offers little more than an increased incarceration rate with no attention given to the socioeconomic problems that feed drug abuse, Bennett has inadvertently forced black leaders to begin questioning the efficacy of their own tradition-bound solutions to the growing drug menace.



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REUTERS BETTMANN NEWSPHOTOS

EAST GERMANY

Free breakfast: East German refugees join a chow line in Hungary on their way to the West.

By Diana Johnstone

EAST GERMANY'S RULERS HAVE A LONGSTANDING method for getting rid of their domestic critics: dump them into West Germany. For example, Vera Wollenberger of the Church from Below recently returned to her home in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) after two years of forced exile in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Wollenberger insists that socialism is not a discredited ideal and hopes for a new, genuine "ecological socialism."

While expelling citizens who want to stay and work for socialism, the GDR is being undermined by the departure of people it wants to keep but who reject socialism altogether.

They are young, healthy, well-educated, hard-working, ambitious, good-looking and blond. Many are driving their own cars out of the East with tow-headed youngsters in the back seat.

Of the 15,000 East Germans who crossed the opened Hungarian border this month on their way to West Germany, most were leaving good jobs, and one in six had weekend country homes back in the GDR. West German employers were eager to snatch them up. The FRG is short of skilled labor, and the GDR has an excellent reputation for education and job training. There was no problem of "compassion fatigue" with these refugees. The West could enjoy identifying with well-nourished blue-eyed Germans moving from one of the world's highest standards of living to one that is even higher. Wuppertal sociologist Volker Ronge has studied such settlers and describes them as "pioneer" types, self-confident winners. Their studious children can keep West German classrooms from being overrun by little Turks. They promise to be lavish consumers. A quick sur-

Young East Germans vote with their Reeboks

vey showed that 61 percent would vote for the Christian Democrats (CDU). Many spoke good English in their media interviews, and their rejoicing had the familiar sound of up-and-coming tennis players assessing their chances after a first winning match.

Such a success story is absolutely unbeatable in the West.

There is nothing amazing about 15,000 upwardly mobile young people moving to a place with greater upward mobility. Some 100,000 East Germans had already applied to go West this year. The spectacular aspect of this trans-Hungarian migration is its political impact. It has given a huge boost to conservative Chancellor Helmut Kohl and has thrown the West German left into considerable confusion.

The Hungarian floodgates were opened at precisely the moment of maximum political profit for the CDU—just as they were beginning their party congress in Bremen.

Hungary for investments: The timing may not have been totally fortuitous. Last May Hungary's leading reformer and candidate for president, Imre Pozsgay, was in Bonn conferring with CDU leaders. Pozsgay seems on the way to creating an Hungarian version of Christian Democracy, and it is quite likely that Christian Democracy and Social Democracy are going to be main political rivals in liberalized Eastern Europe. Hungarians leaning in the CDU direction would not mind being helpful. They were immediately rewarded by promises of extensive investment

from banks in Bavaria, the heartland of conservative Christian Democracy.

In any case, the festive border crossing was a windfall for the CDU congress, providing a unifying theme to distract from the party's internal wrangling. Kohl proclaimed the exodus as proof that "our ideas are winning out" and that the Social Democratic Party (SPD) had run out of steam in its dealings with East Germany. In recent years, SPD leaders have sought and often obtained improvements in such things as travel through talks with leaders of East Germany's ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED). Heiner Geissler, recently fired by Kohl as CDU secretary, and his successor Volker Rühe joined in denouncing the SPD policy as "cottoning up" or "stabilizing totalitarian parties."

Does 'perestroika' spell self-liquidation to an East Germany that exists solely as a counterpoint to capitalist West Germany?

The SPD was severely shaken by these attacks. The irony is that a media-blown event was able to put the SPD on the defensive at the very moment when 20 years of its Ostpolitik was paying off in a very big way, through Gorbachov's *glasnost* and *peres-*

troika.

SPD leaders differed over how to react. Egon Bahr, the patient originator of the "change through getting closer" (*Wandel durch Annäherung*) approach to East Germany, observed tartly that "99.5 percent of the population is staying in the GDR." But some younger party leaders such as Norbert Gansel suggested switching to a policy of "change through taking our distance."

GDR leader Erich Honecker is ill. The SED leadership seems paralyzed. Critics of the East German regime have recently formed fresh opposition groups, such as the "New Forum" and the "Democratic Awakening," seeking open dialogue with a view to democratized socialism or social democracy.

Under pressure to be less indulgent toward the East German Communist leaders, a group of 14 SPD parliamentarians led by Horst Ehmke decided to include such opposition groups in its mid-September visit to the GDR. In response, the East German hosts rudely told the SPD group not to come.

Thus the East German leaders themselves called a halt to "change through getting closer." This seemed to leave everybody momentarily without a constructive policy in a potentially dangerous situation.

The CDU loudly welcomed the summer exodus as a golden opportunity to embarrass the SPD just before a crucial election year. However, there is little sign that encouraging East Germans to move West fits in with any coherent long-term political strategy, either towards solving the "German question" or in regard to domestic politics. The population shift raises problems for both Germans that may not be in the interests of either.

The newly arriving Eastern achievers are conspicuous rivals for West Germans already having trouble finding jobs or housing. Thus even in the midst of the welcoming euphoria, 46 percent of West Germans polled said they did not want to see yet another wave of East Germans. Among voters for the right-wing Republicans, the percentage was 66 percent. The fact is that West Germans are feeling more and more crowded by immigrants, German or non-German. Frustrated house-hunters could only resent the fact that landlords promised to give priority to the "pioneers." Further large-scale housing construction could only destroy carefully preserved green patches in the heavily urbanized country.

Workers of the Third World: East Germany has a labor shortage, which it has been filling by way of factory workers from Third World countries such as Vietnam, Mozambique and Angola, as well as Poles from across the border. These "guest workers" are not at all assimilated. It is obvious that neither the East Germans nor the West Germans—least of all the West German conservatives currently celebrating the migration—want to see East German territory de-Germanized. Import of more foreign labor risks favoring neofascist racist tendencies already spotted among East German working-class youth.

A controversial issue within the left is the effect of the emigration on prospects for democratic reforms inside the GDR. East German Protestant Pastor Friedrich Schorlemer told *Die Tageszeitung* he thought "it would have been better if these people had striven for improvements at home rather than seek reform for themselves in another

Continued on page 22

By Pippa Green

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

THOSE WHO SQUEEZED INTO CAPE TOWN'S Anglican Cathedral of St. George on September 13 listened earnestly to clergyman Lionel Louw, who addressed them before the largest peaceful public protest in nearly three decades got underway: "This is our day today. We are going to be disciplined; we are going to be non-violent....We will take responsibility for our march in favor of justice and freedom."

The march had been given the go-ahead

SOUTH AFRICA

only the day before by State President-elect F.W. de Klerk after weeks of violence in the city. It had been called by Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu and World Alliance of Reform Churches President Allan Boesak and leaders of what is known as the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) to protest the police killing of about 20 people (the exact figure is being disputed) in the segregated black townships on the periphery of Cape Town. Cape Town's white mayor, Gordon Oliver, said he too would join the procession.

Now, for the first time since the emergency, a protest march was effectively legal. Not a single uniformed policeman was in sight. Instead, marshals wearing red and yellow bandanas kept order among the then-10,000 marchers and the 20,000 spectators. The leaders, including Tutu, Boesak, Oliver and Congress of South African Trade Unions leaders Jay Naidoo and Cyril Ramaphosa, edged their way out of the cathedral through the packed streets with a yellow and black banner that read: "PEACE IN OUR CITY, STOP THE KILLINGS."

The marchers, whose ranks grew to about 30,000, were jubilant as they reached city hall, a mile away from the cathedral. They gathered on the Grand Parade, a large tarred square usually used as a parking lot in front of the hall. Someone unfurled the green, black and gold flag of the proscribed African National Congress (ANC) on the balcony where the march leaders stood to address the protestors. Boesak, his arms aloft, captured the excitement of the crowd: "Today is the beginning of the freedom march that we have started....Go tell it to your bosses; go tell it in your townships—even your white townships—go tell it to everyone you see on the streets. 'Our freedom is coming, our freedom is coming, our freedom is coming.'"

Three days later Boesak buried 13-year-old Patrick Miller, who was shot by the police on September 6, the night of the elections for the South African Parliament, which excludes blacks. "I am sick and tired of apartheid. I am sick and tired of burying children who never ever had a chance to have a decent childhood," he told the congregation, which included Patrick's distraught schoolmates and teachers. "Mr. de Klerk will be sitting on his presidential seat in the midst of a pool of blood if justice does not come to this nation."

Hope amid horror: Those few days captured the seesaw mood of despair and hope that has dominated South Africa in the days following the elections. The despair set in a few weeks before the election as police used increasingly harsh tactics against protestors who were deliberately defying apartheid laws and state of emergency regulations that limit free political expression. On election night the police used not only tear gas, whips and rubber bullets in the black townships, but also live ammunition. Among those killed



Defying faiths: church leaders, from left, Allan Boesak, Desmond Tutu and Frank Chikane, leaders of protest.

Signs of hope glimmer amid lethal repression

were a three-year-old, a five-year-old, a 69-year-old woman, a handicapped boy and Patrick, whose mother said she had sent him to the shop to buy bread.

The hope came in the wake of the elections because the government lifted the mantle of repression enough to allow organizations that have been silenced to lead their supporters through the streets of Cape Town in a peaceful, disciplined protest.

The new government, under State President F.W. de Klerk, is feeling for, rather than carrying out, a new direction. De Klerk might hold the political initiative, but the parameters of what he can and cannot do are increasingly being defined by organizations representing the voteless black majority, by threats of international pressure and, form the other side, by white rightists who have a strong presence in the police force.

At the end of election day, the National Party (NP), which has ruled South Africa for 41 years and whose cornerstone has been white minority rule, was returned to power. But the party is unlikely to be able to conduct "business as usual." One reason for this is the reduced support base with which the NP retained its parliamentary majority. It lost 30 of its 123 seats to both the right-wing Conservative Party and the liberal Democratic Party, so it now has 93 seats in the 166-seat House of Assembly.

For black organizations, particularly those in the MDM, which has spearheaded the defiance campaign, the significance of the election is that it has highlighted the fragmentation in the ruling white bloc. It is this fragmentation—and the government's consequent volatility—that has prompted the alternate feelings of hope and despair among the ruled.

Reform and repression: Immediately after the election, de Klerk lumped together the votes for the NP and the DP, calling it a mandate for reform from 70 percent of the white population. But black leaders are still deeply suspicious of the white parliament.

Febe Potgieter, a member of the Western Cape committee of the non-racial coalition group the United Democratic Front, a key component of the MDM, said: "De Klerk might now be allowing protests, but on another level repression is not being lessened. There are still people in detention without trial and a broad range of political prisoners—UDF people as well as Nelson Mandela and ANC people."

Another sign of the fragmentation in government is the unprecedented dissension in the ranks of the police, mainly along color lines. Shortly before the election-night killings, a police lieutenant who is classified "colored" (mixed race) according to South Africa's race laws, lambasted the riot police for the brutality with which they had broken up schoolchildren's protests. Lieutenant Gregory Rockman said the (white) riot policemen's behavior made him ashamed to be a policeman.

The white minority is fragmenting as political space opens a bit for blacks.

But international pressures, which could be particularly damaging to an ailing economy, combined with sustained pressure from black extraparliamentary groupings—principally the MDM, but also black consciousness groups—will probably force de Klerk forward to some sort of reform. Where the path to reform leads is the crucial question.

A huge gulf remains between what de Klerk's government is prepared to offer and what organized black groupings want. Take, for instance, the release of jailed ANC leader Nelson Mandela. Even the new South African Constitutional Development Minister Gerrit Viljoen has agreed it is necessary. "It is one of the first postelection things de Klerk must do to open up the system," says Willie

Breytenbach, the head of the African studies department at the predominantly Afrikaans University of Stellenbosch.

But just how will Mandela's release in and of itself open up a system where almost any opposition activity has been illegal under the martial law of the past four years? Will the government unban the ANC? Will it release the leader of a proscribed organization while still holding leaders of legal anti-apartheid organizations, such as the UDF, in jail without trial? And will it release him into a state of emergency? "Releasing Mandela into a situation where he'll be an unfree agent will be compounding the wrong they have done by keeping him in jail. What do they expect him to do? Sit down and do nothing?" commented Tutu after the elections.

Just as de Klerk's hand was forced on the question of the Cape Town march (and the marches in other city centers that followed), his hand is likely to be forced on Mandela's unconditional release. Despite being a NP stalwart, a segregationist and a conservative in the party, the new president is more pragmatic than his predecessor, P.W. Botha, and probably realizes that negotiations cannot take place only with those black leaders the government likes.

Legal space: The MDM, for its part, realizes that its leaders, including Mandela, are finally being acknowledged as "the people's leaders" but does not want to send them to the negotiating table without the strength of an organized constituency behind them.

Now that de Klerk has opened the door a crack to legal political activity, the MDM is pushing for the right to campaign freely throughout the country. "We are saying we want the right to organize, the right to have meetings," Cape Town advocate and local chairman of the United Democratic Front Dullah Omar told the jubilant Cape Town marchers on September 13. "We want to be able to discuss our ideas freely, because we believe that if we put our ideas to the people and we campaign through the length and breadth of this country, we will be able to persuade the overwhelming majority to support us and we will be able to transform this country into a non-racial democracy in a peaceful manner."

Pippa Green covers South Africa for *In These Times*.

Guatemala

Continued from page 3

whom are former political exiles, report threats.

From August 21 to September 11, comandos kidnapped 11 members and leaders of the University Students Association (AEU), long accused by the extreme right of "subversive activities" and "communist indoctrination" at the national university. On September 10 the corpses of four of those kidnapped, who appeared to have been brutally tortured, appeared just outside the university campus in the capital.

"Most of the abuses, which include torture and assassination, are committed by military and police officers," the London-based human rights group Amnesty International claimed in a new report on Guatemala. The report's authors said that although some civilian officials may be involved, "President

Cerezo does not seem directly connected to death-squad activities, but his government is not investigating the assassinations."

Added Guatemalan Social Democrat Party head Mario Solorzano: "Government officials may know exactly who is responsible, but they don't have the courage to reveal who they are."

Indeed, GAM leaders claim that in the weeks preceding the attacks against their organization they repeatedly appealed for government protection, futilely requesting investigations into constant death threats and daily surveillance of their offices by armed groups in unmarked cars. "The civilian government has totally sold out to the army," GAM President Nineth de Garcia told *In These Times*. "Officials pay no attention to our calls for help, and by doing nothing they are also directly responsible for the rights violations."

Exile or change: Regardless of who is re-

sponsible, the rising repression now threatens to destroy the country's political openings. GAM says it helped at least 50 labor and student activists and their families escape into exile in recent months, and other union leaders say dozens more are quietly leaving the country.

"People are terrified by the violence now and many are backing off, limiting their plans and actions and hoping they won't be targeted," said one longtime foreign labor adviser here who requested anonymity. "Just the fear alone is enough to stop people, and it's incredible how many are fleeing the country."

Local opposition groups hope that growing international pressure will force the Cerezo government to crack down on rights abuses. The chancellors of all the public universities in Central America met twice since August with Guatemalan congressional and executive officials to appeal for their inter-

vention to save the AEU students still "missing." Also, the congressional Guatemalan Human Rights Commission approved an emergency resolution calling on the United Nations to immediately send a special observer to investigate rights abuses.

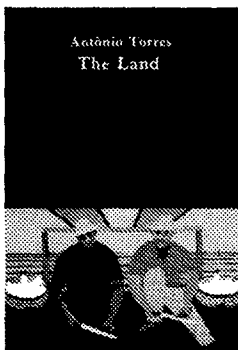
Even the U.S. State Department issued a new travel advisory in August, counseling American citizens to exercise caution when visiting the country. The U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee in charge of reviewing proposed foreign aid for 1990 also warned that "it will be very difficult to support high levels of economic or military aid [to Guatemala] if the human rights abuses do not stop." The U.S. Congress voted no military aid to Guatemala from 1977 to 1985 because of rights violations, but since the 1986 return to civilian rule \$28 million in direct, non-lethal military assistance has been approved for the Cerezo administration.

Meanwhile a broad array of Guatemalan organizations are now discussing the formation of a united National Front Against the Violence. The front will include the Catholic Church and other religious denominations, unions, peasant organizations, professional guilds, democratic political parties and others.

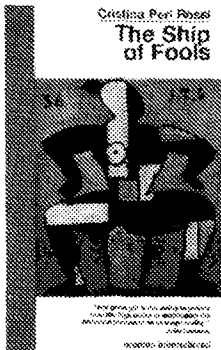
"The creation of a broad front is the priority now to fight for the survival of political freedoms in Guatemala," said one high-level leader of the Labor and Popular Action Unity. He somberly admitted, however, that the escalating attacks "could force us into silence once again. Terror has a major impact on everybody, and with barely four to five years of open reorganization, the popular movement may not yet have the strength to appropriately respond to repression." □

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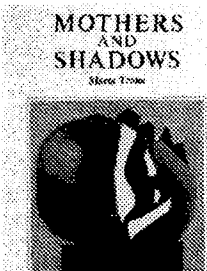
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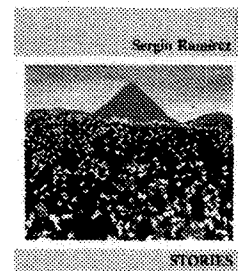
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By Lawrence Kootnikoff

MONTREAL

THE CRAMPED, STOREFRONT CAMPAIGN OFFICE of the Equality Party in Westmount, Quebec, stands in sharp contrast to the spacious sixth-floor headquarters of the ruling Liberal Party a few blocks away. The Liberal machine is run by experienced professionals; the Equality campaign is the work of political neophytes.

You'd never guess from appearances the two parties are running neck-and-neck in this wealthy Montreal-area riding (district).

CANADA

But for the first time in generations, voters in this and other mostly English-speaking constituencies may vote against the local Liberal candidate. It's a symptom of the trouble Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa is having among Anglophone voters, once solid Liberals, as the September 25 provincial election approaches.

For generations, Westmount has symbolized Anglophone power in Quebec and has been a bastion of the Quebec Liberal Party. But Anglophones feel betrayed by Bourassa and his government's language policies, and Westmount has become a focus for that anger.

Hugging the western slopes of Montreal's Mount Royal, the municipality has historically been home to the province's English-speaking elite. The men who lived in the gracious Victorian stone mansions overlooking the city and the St. Lawrence River once made the decisions that ran the economy and the lives of millions of Quebecers.

Those days are long gone. But one tradition that remained was the solid vote from the English community for the federalist Liberals. The threat from the growing independence movement and the separatist Parti Quebecois (PQ) kept Anglophone voters loyal to the Liberal Party. But Westmount is threatening to break that tradition on September 25. Voters will tell you why in a word: Bill 178.

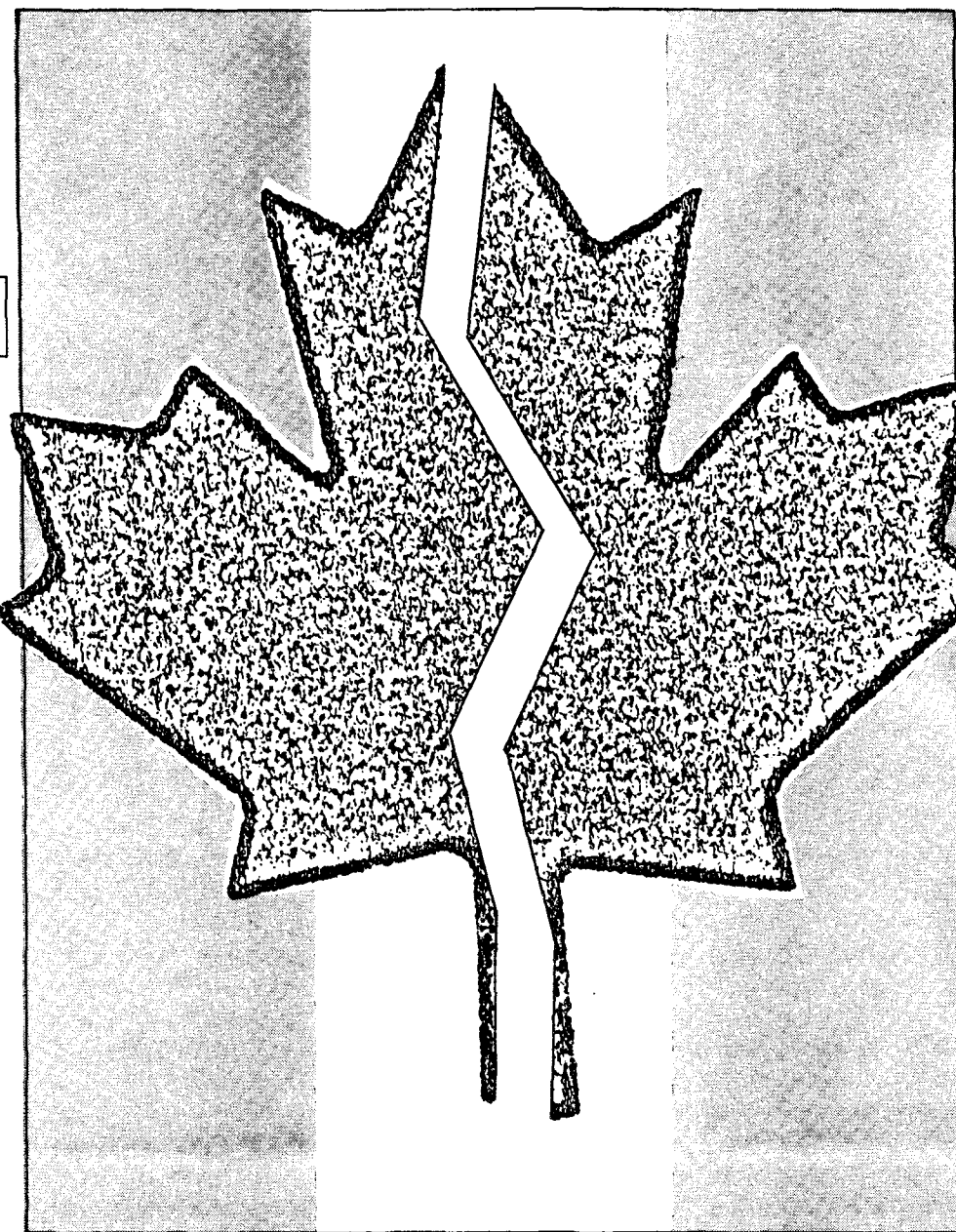
The Equality Party is running 19 candidates in Montreal-area ridings. Its rural-based cousin, the Unity Party, is running 16 candidates. Both parties were formed earlier this year in the wake of the Canadian Supreme Court's decision last December on Bill 101, striking down the provincial language law that banned commercial signs in languages other than French. (see *ITT*, Jan. 18) as a violation of Canada's Charter of Rights.

Sign languages: Anglophones had voted massively for Bourassa in 1985 on the strength of his promise to modify Bill 101. Bourassa told them a Liberal government would allow bilingual signs. But following the court's ruling, he feared a nationalist backlash and instead introduced Bill 178, an attempt at compromise that pleased neither Anglophones nor Francophone nationalists. English would now be allowed on signs, but only inside commercial establishments. Signs on the outside of the buildings would remain in French only.

Anglophones were outraged. But their only alternative to the Liberals was the PQ, led by hard-line separatist Jacques Parizeau.

Anglophones represent about 15 percent of the voters and are concentrated in the Montreal area. With most polls predicting an easy Liberal victory, neither of the new parties threatens the Bourassa's majority in the 125-member national assembly. What they do threaten is the historic pact between

Quebec's Anglophones ringing mad



English voters and the Liberal Party. In return for voting Liberal, Anglophones have been guaranteed a seat at the table of power.

But now disaffected Anglophones talk of "sending a message" to the government by voting for Equality or Unity candidates. Alliance Quebec, the provincewide Anglophone rights group, has called on Anglophones to either vote for one of the new parties or spoil their ballots.

It's the kind of talk that makes William Cosgrove, Liberal candidate in the riding, grow impatient. "Look, the message has been sent," he told *In These Times*. "Someone has to work within the government now, not just

send messages from the outside."

Richard Holden disagrees. The 57-year-old lawyer is running against Cosgrove for the Equality Party and is the group's star candidate. "We've been working from within for years. We had the strongest English-speaking representation in history in the last Cabinet. And where did it get us?"

"Send Holden to Quebec City," reads an Equality Party bumper sticker. "And Cosgrove back to Washington." That refers to the fact that Cosgrove has spent the last 15 years in Washington as a vice president of the World Bank. Dubbed "Rip Van Cosgrove" by a local columnist, in the first days of his

campaign he displayed a dismal lack of understanding for the current anger among Anglophones. For them it crystallized the feeling they were being taken for granted in a riding that voted 76 percent Liberal in the last election.

Holden his own: The Equality Party has gained credibility by attracting the likes of the fluently bilingual Holden, a lifelong Westmount resident. An activist with the federal Conservative Party, he's drawn the support of the area's federal Liberal member of parliament and of novelist Mordecai Richler. He's given a real chance at defeating the Liberals' Cosgrove.

Polls show Holden's party running ahead of the Liberals in several mostly Anglophone Montreal ridings, including Westmount. "I

English-speakers angry over French-only signs want to "send a message" by voting against the Liberals, but risk marginalization by doing so.

think if we can elect at least four in Montreal, it would be a start," he says.

But observers are divided as to whether or not that would be a good thing. It might set French-English relations back years. Whether Anglophones like it or not, the Liberals and the PQ are reflecting a consensus among the French-speaking majority on the language issue. Anglophones risk marginalization by voting for marginal single-issue parties. Francophones might interpret such a vote as a rejection of Quebec's social and linguistic reality and a desire to return to another era.

The days when Anglophones ruled the roost in Quebec are gone. The question for the community now is whether they "send a message," or swallow their pride in return for a seat at the table. □

Lawrence Kootnikoff covers Canadian developments for *In These Times*.

Hard times help 'fascist' escape from the fringe

By Lawrence O'Connor

OSLO, NORWAY

FOR MOST OF HIS 16-YEAR POLITICAL CAREER, Carl I. Hagen has been considered little more than a bad joke on the far-right fringe of Norway's highly factionalized political scene. A relentless and often solitary critic of the Scandinavian welfare state, Hagen has been roundly derided by a broad coalition of academics, journalists and mainstream politicians as a demagogue and a buffoon. But with 13 percent of the vote in the September 11 parliamentary elections going to his ultra-conservative Party of Progress, Hagen has been elevated from a position of relative impotence to that of key political player, and

perhaps even kingmaker, to the next government. And for his critics, some of whom privately call Hagen a fascist, the situation has lost all its humor.

NORWAY

"Four years ago we didn't take him seriously," says Stig Nilsson, campaign manager for the ruling minority Labor Party. "We thought he was an idiot, a nobody who came from nowhere and would lead to nowhere. Nobody, absolutely nobody, took him serious. Now they do. But it's a bit late."

Hagen, who demands sweeping market-oriented economic reforms and a return to

the traditional social values of hard work and respect for authority, made his debut in 1973 as the understudy of Anders Lange, an ultra-conservative patriarch whose ties to right-wing causes dated back to the pro-German League of the Fatherland in the '30s. Each won seats in the Storting (parliament) under the preposterous banner of Anders Lange's Party for the Reduction of Taxes, Tariffs and Government Encroachment.

After Lange's death in 1975, Hagen took over the organization, redubbing it the Party of Progress after a similar Danish party moderately successful in the '70s and again on the rise in Denmark.

Since then Hagen has managed to keep his Storting seat for 12 of the last 16 years, but the Party of Progress has never won a full 5 percent of the vote in a national election or more than four parliamentary seats. Hard economic times in Norway in the last several years have helped Hagen turn that around.

Continued on page 22

IN THESE TIMES SEPTEMBER 27-OCTOBER 3, 1989 11



Back in the USSR
pop-culture *perestroika*
rocks the foundations
of communist kitsch.

ROCK in a hard place

"Rock must be subversive or it's not really rock."
—Boris Grebenshchikov

THE PEPSI AD HAS IT WRONG. THEY DON'T sing for Pepsi, and Mikhail Gorbachov may be good for Russian rock, but they don't sing for *perestroika* either.

There is a new generation and a new Russian pop culture being hyped by East and West. Back in the USSR, everybody's on (or claims to be on) the new Russian wave. This can play like "*perestroika* pops," giving Soviet socialism a face for glamour magazines and pumping some much-needed pizzazz into the Soviet image at home and abroad. There's got to be a market here, and so, too, the West jumps to catch the new Russian wave and bottle it for sale. But this Red's not for us, even if the May *Playboy* bloomed with the Soviet actress Natalya Negoda in the buff in newsstands across the good of USA.

Meanwhile, back in the hub of the new scene—Leningrad—the talk no longer flows in whispered conspiracies of the rock 'n' roll "us" against the bureaucratic "them." Now it turns on one-liners about who's coming out with a new release on the state recording company's Melodiya label or, better yet, on Warner Brothers. Or who has the next spotlight on Soviet TV's version of MTV—"The Musical Ring." Or who's touring in the West. Or just who does Boris Grebenshchikov think he is.

He is the lead vocal of the Leningrad rock art collective Akvarium, and, with his newly released American album, Grebenshchikov went from a cult figure of the Leningrad underground to the front pages of *The Village Voice* and *Rolling Stone*—and has even been discovered by Melodiya.

Gavno happens: "But he's become a complete degradation and pure *gavno* [shit]," complains his former collaborator, the rock and jazz artist Sergei Kurekhin of Pop Mechanics. The problem of success started in 1986 when Los Angeles rocker Joanna Stingray issued a bootleg album of Russian rock, *Red Wave*, that brought the rock art from underground to foreground. Then, well, "everybody started licking ass," says Mike Naumenko, lead singer of Leningrad's Zoopark, who declined the opportunity to be part of *Red Wave*.

Not quite everybody—while the new Soviet scene is spinning off nice pieces of rock fluff for milder Soviet tastes, the radical core is heating up. What it wants from rock is a popular medium for drawing together diverse cultural experiments and a point of historical reference for the Russians to pick up where Western punk left off.

This is Russian post-punk that celebrates its negation of Soviet reality, not to point the way for Russia's westernization or even for a new order, but so that out of the depths of total denial these new Russian Reds can claim the hope of an alternative for their generation.

The appeal of rock for the Russians lies in this promise. They flaunted Western decadence in the geriatric faces of Brezhnev's bureaucrats and scorned Soviet popular music (called *estrada* in Russian), turning to rock out of the conviction, in the words of Grebenshchikov, that "rock must be subversive or it's not really rock."

Madonna is trying to do the same thing. As she said in the May *Interview*, "I want to say that this is reality, and reality sucks." But the difference stems from their points of origin.

Russian rock artists began from where Madonna, Debbie Harry, Lou Reed, David Bowie, U2 and virtually any of our rock stars over age 30 want to be. The Russians found their way to rock through poetry, mime, dance and the arts. As the generation of Bob Dylan and Keith Richards, they trust in a rock 'n' roll audience over 30 (our stars might take heart knowing that the major figures on the Russian rock scene began their careers on the back side of their 30s).

But middle-aged rock it's not, because the Russians never have lost sight of the sheer energy, fun and zest that lies at the heart of rock's appeal. In other words, they are also *the way we were*.

Russian rock roars with that young fire ours had in the '50s but that has been lost in computerized, synthesized, multitracked, push-button rock of the '80s. Russian rockers deliver recordings—usually on the first take—that have that rough and raw feel, that "goodness gracious, great balls of fire" of early American rock.

My degeneration: This stuff also had no choice but to feed into the making of a Soviet counterculture. Sown in the Khrushchov years, Russian rock culture was a late bloomer on the Soviet landscape, coming up in the final Brezhnev years as Soviet leadership combined its mistrust of popular Western culture with a hunch that being young was a form of suspect activity.

While Brezhnev slept on it, his successors issued threats—as when Andropov called the young generation of the '80s "sponges on socialism." In the year of Chernenko the old guard spent its last energies on a campaign to rid the country of a "rock 'n' roll menace" spread, according to the Soviet press, by "the agents of the CIA's psychological 'Operation Barbarossa' directed against Soviet youth" like "the spiritual equivalent of AIDS."

The Soviet establishment was worse than square. It was so hostile it made the very existence of rock a political act and the gathering of fans a conspiracy. Rock was the road to institutional disfavor and certain poverty without the chance for a recording on the Melodiya label or a gig on the Soviet concert stage.

From the early to mid-'80s, underground rock

'n' roll flourished in the sanctuaries of the young—the Leningrad Rock Club, the Moscow Rock Laboratory, regional music festivals and unofficial studios across the Soviet Union. There, a counterculture fed on alienated talent and political hope was nurtured by taking the old guard at its word when it said rock 'n' roll would be the downfall of the Soviet order.

Changes at the top in 1985 were at first irrelevant to this underground, and then, slowly, came the realization that *glasnost* could rock. By 1987 Melodiya was signing artists it previously had ignored, and prime-time Soviet TV was airing groups still too radical for a release on the Melodiya label.

A heavy-metal beat and a little punk fashion might have been a political statement before 1985, but by 1988 Russian rock was walking on the safe side of *glasnost*. "What we have now," rock critic Artemy Troitsky said last January, "is a punk *glasnost* for fools. Right now in Russia we have only two choices: to make serious art or to make serious politics."

Some are trying both. This is not straight *perestroika* politics, in which the rock artists seized by *glasnost* decry the evils of Brezhnev's "era of stagnation," but a radical rock *perestroika* that inverts conventional political meanings, symbols and identities—reducing the most cherished essentials of Soviet politics to a kitsch that lies beyond absurd and just possibly beyond the capacity for belief by anyone of the new generation.

Papa was a rolling stone: Start with stepping on the memories of the "Great Patriotic War" that serves the older generation as their final point of pride. They defended the homeland against fascism! But when virtually all of young Russia goes about in its crowded apartments singing one of the most popular songs of 1988 and 1989—"Your Papa's a Fascist" by Leningrad's Televizor—a rock hit can quickly bring out the fascist in every Soviet home.

Even more offensive to an older generation's pride in the war struggle is the latest from Vovva Sinii, the self-styled Sid Vicious of Moscow. Vovva's album *Death in the Arrogant Zone* contains a song called "My Dear Hitler Kaput!," which is set to a choral background worthy of the Soviet Army Chorus, over which the Vovva moans (in German):

One, two, three,
My dear Hitler kaput!
Oh, no! Oh, no!
My dear Hitler kaput!



Sinii, the self-styled Sid Vicious of Moscow, chills with homeboy V.I. "Little Nicky" Lenin.

To call this music satire implies subtlety that is not there. But don't gloss over the devotion to the obnoxious that lies at the heart of Vovva's music. It is dedicated to provocation above all else, with all other considerations, including music, art and rudimentary decency, being secondary or irrelevant.

Glasnost called for "openness" to cure the ills of Soviet society, but the new wave is giving it an overdose of the outrageous as the Russian post-punk answer to a society suffering from a terminal case of kitsch. For this post-punk style of the outrageous, no act can top the Moscow group DK and its founder Sergei Zharikov. About as tactful as the Dead Kennedys, Zharikov's music is a hilarious romp across Soviet life and politics. In his "Lenin Speaks to Us," voices turn to Lenin saying, "Let's ask for guidance from Lenin." Then a documentary recording plays what is unmistakably Lenin's voice, yet it's completely incomprehensible.

A song dedicated to Brezhnev plays his slurred voice proclaiming the glories of the Soviet future now at hand for Soviet children while the background plays Tchaikovsky's Fifth Piano Concerto. Brezhnev is an easy target these days but Zharikov also aims at those more protected. In one work he has Gorbachov repeatedly asking

a store clerk, "And what else is there?" followed invariably by, "There is nothing else, comrade secretary." The song ends with a version of a well-known elementary school song and dance with Zharikov's refrain, "Misha, Misha, Misha, Raissa, let's dance in the *gavno*."

A thigh is just a thigh: This new culture also conspires to transform the symbols of the Soviet politics into sex symbols. The recently released film *Little Vera* by Vasily Pichul shocked most Soviet audiences for its explicit scenes of the sex romps of randy Russian kids while delivering its politics in one crucial scene. The heroine, little Vera (played by Natalya Negoda) lies in her string bikini astride her boyfriend in red jockey briefs who asks, "Vera, do you have a goal?" She replies, repeating the banner slogan of the Brezhnev years, "Of course, our goal is Communism!" as her thigh slides across his knee.

In that scene the Brezhnev era came to an end not with a bang but with a thigh.

This sexual *perestroika* reconstructs the most square and sexless of Soviet symbols into teasers for a little sex and titillation. No

one does the trick better than 27-year-old Moscow fashion artist Katya Filipova.

By training a graphic artist and photographer, Katya moved into fashion art in the early '80s, first by providing the costumes for rock performances and then by staging her fashions as street happenings in the city.

"I take the symbols and insignias—the objects of Soviet culture, and especially Stalinist culture, and transform them into sexual objects," she says. One of her favorites is an evening dress for Komsomols (Young Communists) in which she took the triangular orange banner of the Young Communists and shaped it to fall from the naked model's shoulders to just below her waist. The lower "V" of this Communist banner did just barely manage to cover essentials but left open a generous peek at the hips.

She also features "Stalinist lingerie," a sort of Stalinist variant on Nazi body wear that offers naughty S & M coordinates of panties, garters and bras with straps of black lace and leather that bind the torso, while strategically positioned souvenir buttons with the faces of Stalin, Lenin, Brezhnev and, yes, even Mikhail Sergeevich, stare out protecting the model's modesty. Or, in tribute to Lenin, she offers miniature pierced earrings of Lenin in

cameo fashioned out of the standard Lenin pins available in every Soviet kiosk.

Young men too are exploring the politics of sexual irony. There's a feisty young male rock ensemble called Time of Love that hails from an abandoned warehouse on Tchaikovsky Street in Leningrad—a rock cooperative called NCH/VCH (or AC/DC). Time of Love's specialty is not direct political confrontation but sexual scandal. In the words of the group's lead vocalist, Misha Bernikov, "Ours is not a political group; ours is a sexual group."

In September 1988 they showed what they meant. Time of Love received permission to perform at the Leningrad Rock Club on their promise that their number "Social Rock" served the cause of peace and would draw the young's attention to the problem of American nuclear weapon tests in Nevada. The lyrics shrieked and heavy metal blasted while they kept their promise with the lines:

*Where there's music playing,
That's where the girls give a little,
And when the girls give a little,
It's like the bombs going off in Nevada.*

A bit impudent, but the lyrics were not what caused the scandal. As he worked his way through the song, Misha tongued the microphone and stripped down as he proclaimed, "Taking it off is a form of *perestroika*!"

Schlock of the new: This stuff may be silly, but it's serious silliness. The Russian new wave is the Russian artistic left's second try in this century. Their first assault in the '20s—from Russian futurism to constructivism—drew its inspiration from the absolute conviction that art must be simultaneously radical in its politics, innovative in its forms and genuinely mass-based and popular in its appeal.

There are sharp political teeth behind the mocking grins of the Russian rock stage. They remember that Vladimir Mayakovsky, the Russian futurist of the '20s, called his art "a slap in the face of public taste" and the credo of the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin—"the urge to destroy is a creative urge." That nihilism is in their genes, though their motto would probably be "the urge to laugh is a creative urge." Their laughter is radical, but it's still laughter.

A case in point is the rock video popular in Estonia last winter, "Flying Like Yuri Gagarin." It takes documentary footage of the first Soviet cosmonaut (a more wholesome hero Soviet minds and hearts never had). He is waving once again to the cheering crowds, to children, to leaders on the mausoleum and to us. The video sets the old film to music as upbeat as the best of Soviet schlock but takes an irreverent poke at the hero's death in a plane crash. The refrain:

*Let's fly like Yuri Gagarin,
They put the first man in space,
But Aeroflot brought him down.*

That's it. Let 'em "fly like Yuri Gagarin," hitching a ride on Soviet kitsch and bringing the whole show down with a laugh. □

Nick Hayes teaches Soviet history and politics at Hamline University. This article is taken from his book in progress, *Red Metal: Youth, Counter-Culture and Rock in the Soviet Union*, and draws from interviews in the Soviet Union from 1988 and 1989.

EDITORIAL



Capital gains tax is a Democratic Party test

The tax reform of 1986, hailed by Ronald Reagan as "the best anti-poverty, pro-family measure and the the best job-creation program ever to come out of the Congress of the United States," did help those in the lowest income brackets, but it was a godsend for the rich. While the 41 million taxpayers who earned less than \$20,000 a year saved an average of \$140 under the 1986 reform act, the 700,000 who earned more than \$200,000 saved an average of \$3,362. Under the previous law, itself a generous tax giveaway to the rich, there were 15 individual tax brackets ranging from 11 percent for the lowest incomes to 50 percent for the highest. The 1986 law substituted two rates with a "bubble" in between. Families of four with incomes up to \$30,000 now pay 15 percent and those above that and up to \$75,000 pay 28 percent, as do those with incomes of more than \$200,000. The bubble is for those with incomes from \$75,000 to \$200,000. They pay 33 percent, 5 percent more than the wealthiest Americans. In other words, the very rich got a lot larger tax cut in 1986 than any other group.

The rationale for this was twofold. First, Reagan argued, a 50 percent tax bracket "struck at the heart of the economic life of the individual, punishing that special effort and extra hard work that has always been the driving force of our economy"—as if the wealthy ever paid anywhere near the nominal 50 percent tax or were discouraged by it in their drive for greater and greater riches. And second, that the great volume of money left in the hands of the wealthy as a result of the tax cuts would be invested in productive enterprise, thereby creating good jobs and strengthening our economy.

But the American public did not really believe this, and a majority in Congress, even though dependent on financing from the wealthy, felt it politically necessary to close one of the favorite loopholes of the rich—the capital gains tax, under which 60 percent of the profit made from the sale of assets was tax-exempt. So capital gains are now taxed at the same rate as ordinary income.

Enter George Bush: There isn't much about which George Bush has been firm and decisive, but he has been absolutely clear about taxes. Taxes, at least those on the wealthy, will not be raised if he can help it. Indeed, as he made clear even during his 1988 campaign, he will do his best to cut the capital gains tax, which has now become the hottest issue in Congress.

Proponents of a reduction in capital gains taxation—to a maximum of about 20 percent—argue that a lower tax on asset sales will encourage people to sell and reinvest in productive enterprises, thereby stimulating the economy and creating jobs. Past experience, however, provides no evidence that this is so. It is much more likely that the great bulk of the money saved will be by the

wealthiest and that this will go into leveraged buyouts and other forms of speculation that only threaten greater instability in the economy.

Some in Congress also buy the administration argument that a cut in the capital gains tax will increase revenue because the lower rate will bring on a rush of asset sales that will more than make up for the lower rate. This may well be true for a year or two, but after that revenues will drop. In any case, if more revenue is what's needed, it can be raised simply. Congress need only extend the 33 percent bubble rate to all incomes above \$200,000. In other words, increase the tax rates on the highest bracket by 5 percent so it is in line with that of middle-income families. That is what Rep. Byron L. Dorgan (D-ND) has proposed, but which failed in an 18-18 tie in the House Ways and Means Committee.

Dorgan's proposal not only makes sense but is also in line with popular sentiment. There is little or no public support for yet another tax break for the wealthy. Indeed, the vast majority of citizens favor increasing taxes on the wealthy as a way of reducing the deficit. This is an issue on which the Democrats could finally begin to remake their public image in a positive way—though, of course, it might also exacerbate their fundraising problems. But the party can't have it both ways. Either they will have to start representing the majority of Americans, or continue to be the second party of big business. The latter path will lead them nowhere.

If you think crack is bad, try a puff of ice

Suppose, just suppose, that Bush's war on cocaine succeeds. Production is cut. Borders are tightened up to the point where it's too expensive to bring the stuff in. The street price of cocaine and crack go so high that use plummets.

Victory? Not quite. Even now, with cocaine abundant and prices low, a new, homemade competitor is beginning to flood the market. It's called smokable methamphetamine, or ice. It's a form of speed that provides a much longer period of euphoria than crack, followed by a much more depressing and dangerous reaction. And it is already widely available in Honolulu. This one makes crack look benign, according to press reports, and it can be made cheaply in the U.S. in simple laboratories.

In short, this problem is not going to be solved on the supply side. Even if cocaine were eliminated but the market wasn't, something else would take its place. Bush's war won't do, nor will media hysteria. The country needs a more serious consideration of this problem, and the sooner our "leaders" recognize this the better.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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LETTERS

Harrington revisited

HAROLD MEYERSON'S OBITUARY OF MICHAEL Harrington (*ITT*, Aug. 30) was a carefully edited rendition of Harrington's past.

Meyerson's comments on Harrington's role in the debate within the Socialist Party (SP) over the Vietnam War are highly misleading. Harrington was part of the right wing of the SP that opposed participation within the anti-war movement because of the demand for the unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops and because they wanted to work within the Democratic Party. (Being a loyal Democrat was hardly consistent with militant opposition to a war prosecuted by Johnson and Humphrey.)

The SP's right wing (Harrington as well as Shachtman) consistently voted against resolutions offered by the left wing (the Debs Caucus) calling for SP participation within the anti-war movement. Does anyone remember seeing Harrington, the then-national chair of the SP and well-known author of *The Other America*, at major rallies against the war?

It is true that eventually Harrington and his followers split from the Shachtmanites, but by that point it hardly mattered as the anti-war movement had completely bypassed the then-Socialist Party.

Michael Harrington made some important contributions to the American left. But his role during the Vietnam War was not one of them.

Norman Thomas himself was less than comfortable with Harrington as his "successor," since Harrington attempted to split the Socialist Party's youth group from the SP to Max Shachtman's Independent Socialist League before the ISI itself merged into the SP in the '50s.

Rick Kissel
Milwaukee

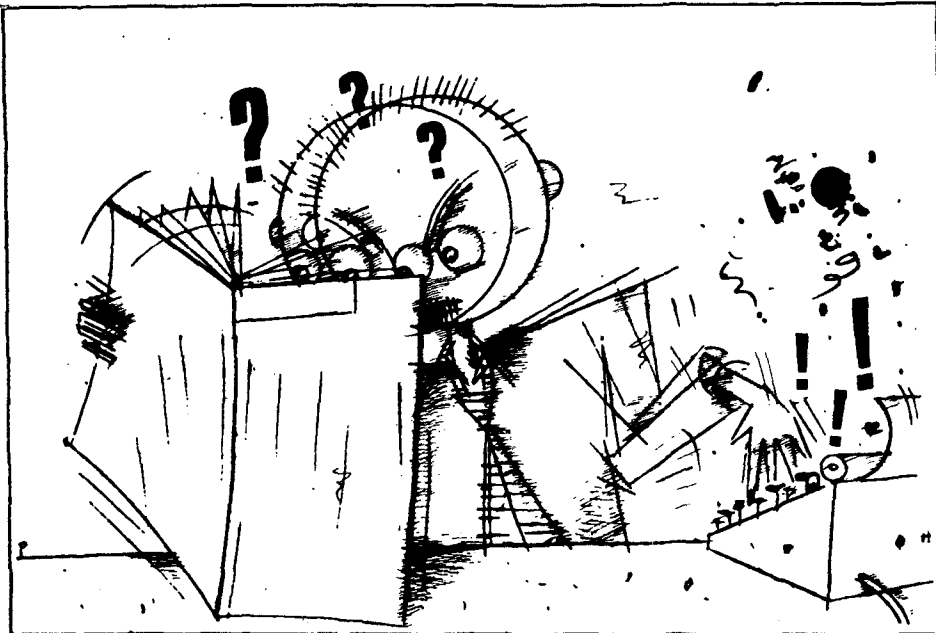
Scurrilous

AS A SOCIALIST DEDICATED TO BUILDING A strong and inclusive movement, I'd like to object to what I can only characterize as a sectarian and incorrect slur directed by David Moberg against the Detroit-based magazine *Labor Notes* (*ITT*, Aug. 30).

Labor Notes (LN) does not, as Moberg would have it, promote "democracy incidentally to its main goal of a more militant labor movement," nor can "union democracy transcend politics," as Moberg's source Herman Benson would believe.

LN does have the goal of a militant labor movement in mind, as I assume *ITT* might also, but there is nothing "incidental" about its democratic program. LN has a profound faith that democracy is radical, that once unleashed, a democratic-as-is-possible working-class movement would adopt what the currently bureaucratic AFL-CIO leadership has not: social unionism. That faith does not mean, as Moberg's phrasing implies, that LN would deny critical support to a right-wing or populist insurgency within a bureaucratic union, so long as that insurgency had the apparently sincere aim of union democracy, and it also does not mean, as Moberg's phrasing further implies, that LN would abandon union democracy if it no longer appeared to be part of the road to a "militant labor movement." To give any other impression is scurrilous.

The fact is, a successful labor movement



will need to be both democratic and class-conscious. *Labor Notes* is pushing for both, with good reason. They should not be slandered along their way, especially by fellow socialists who are trained in the democratic side of Marxism.

Christopher Phelps
Portland, Ore.

Yin-yang socialism

WITH ONE GRIEVOUS EXCEPTION, I AGREE with the exposition of failures of communism and capitalism in your editorial "Communism's crisis, socialism's opportunity" (*ITT*, Aug. 30).

When you say of our own capitalism, "although it has done better in providing for its people than any other we have yet known," you disregard the mixed economies of Scandinavia, Holland, West Germany, Switzerland and Austria. These are countries with the world's highest standard of living: minimal poverty; low unemployment; the best education, health, child care, retirement, public transportation and housing available to all of their people. These are countries with high voter participation whose politics and mass media of communications are not dominated either by corporations or a totalitarian political party. These are countries demonstrating that capitalism, with its enterprise in quest of short-term profits, and socialism, with its communal concern for long-term consequences, are the yin and yang of a globally interdependent technological economy—forces of nature in tension, always competing, sometimes in civil

conflict, sometimes collaborating, but always in a context of genuine democracy and peace.

Until we have an effective movement in the U.S. to transform our warfare state to a more democratic, life-enhancing peace-state that makes the same commitment of resources to wage peace that it used for half a century to wage war, we can look forward to the chaos and impoverishment suffered today by the people of capitalist Brazil and Argentina.

Nicholas V. Seidita
Northridge, Calif.

It works

THIS LETTER IS AN ANSWER TO THE IGNORANCE OF a reader who authored "Pope Sin" (*ITT*, Sept. 6). The author refers to the joke of natural family planning supported by the Catholic church and offers his sister as proof of its failure. I too am proof. But the natural family planning with which I was conceived (and probably the sister of the author) was actually more commonly known as "the rhythm method."

Natural family planning that is taught now (in most places) is vastly different than that taught prior to 1979. Facts only. I practice the sympto-thermal method of birth control—it is known as natural family planning. It is completely natural and is supported not only by Catholics but members of many other Christian and non-Christian religions. But who cares. It works. This method of birth control takes no more time each day than swallowing a pill, and it is

certainly less expensive (I've spent \$10 on it in 3 years). Its success rate is far more impressive and less harmful than artificial means. Post-1979 natural family planning has nothing to do with papal respect. Its basis is respect of and for the human body.

The opinions of others (namely the author of the letter) are of no consequence to me. If you want to have an abortion, go ahead, but it seems as though there are easier means to solving the unwanted pregnancy problem. And lashing out against something simply because it makes the pope happy seems highly illogical.

Regina Muzika Klein
Oley, Pa.

Legalizing drugs and lawsuits

THE RECENT ARTICLES ADVOCATING LEGALIZED drug sales bring to mind a question. If sales are legalized, how long will it be before the suppliers are nailed by lawsuits? It seems likely that someone who has become addicted to heroin or someone who has been assaulted by a citizen whacked out on legalized angel dust or methamphetamines would rush to court to bring suit against the manufacturer of the drugs or against the legislators who legalized them. Alcohol and cigarette manufacturers have defended themselves against similar suits, but less-established manufacturers of addictive drugs would have a more difficult time doing so. I think that legalized marijuana sales would make sense and might make it past the lawsuit obstacles, but the legalized sale of more potent substances would pose many complications in our lawsuit-loving society.

John Rebers
Marquette, Mich.

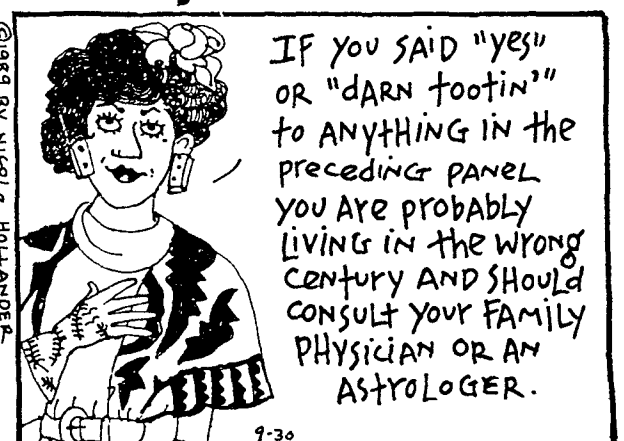
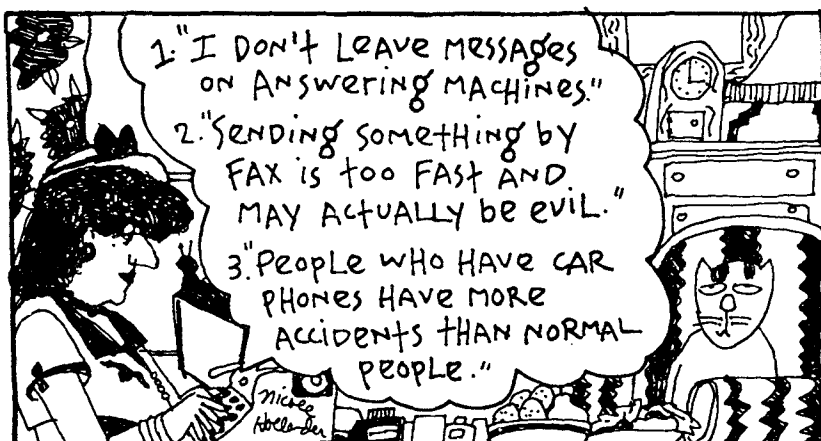
Correction

There was an error in the "Everybody's Business" column, by David Kotz, appearing in the August 2 issue of *ITT*. The figure of \$135 billion, reported as the officially estimated funds required to pay off the depositors of insolvent savings and loans over the next decade, should have been \$115 billion. The rest of the \$157.6 billion total bailout cost, or about \$42.6 billion, is interest payments.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

SYLVIA

Release Saturday



by Nicole Hollander

IN THESE TIMES SEPTEMBER 27-OCTOBER 3, 1989 15

By John Feffer

FOLLOWING THEIR STUNNING LEAP INTO national government, Solidarity officials have filled the air with talk of markets and venture capital. Has Solidarity shucked its natural constituency and embraced raw capitalism? What's happened to trade unionism, social democracy, the Swedish example, worker self-management, privatization with a human face—a third way between centralized planning and the market?

To listen to the rhetoric of the new Solidarity politicians—from new “conservative” prime minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki to “leftie” Solidarity daily newspaper editor Adam Michnik—rapid marketization of the economy is the only solution to Poland's decade-old economic crisis. A nearly \$40 billion foreign debt, spiraling inflation, outdated heavy industry, a stone-age telecommunications system, inefficient agriculture and costly food subsidies all contribute to a depressed standard of living that hasn't recovered to 1978 levels. These are the unavoidable problems—and it would seem neoconservative capitalism is the solution.

While it is true that the latest legal incarnation of Solidarity has been inching closer to economic conservatism, the “Polish solution” is not the Friedman/Hayak fantasy that it might seem to be. Several factors mitigate the neoconservatism.

Vague descriptions of free markets serve as a handy political substitute for the concrete program Solidarity is desperately trying to devise, one that should have been prepared before Solidarity ever began negotiating with the government last February. This rhetoric conceals equally strong commitments to key social democratic ideals that have carried over from the earlier Solidarity period of 1980-81. And since virtually all programs of economic reform require additional influxes of capital, Poles of all political stripes shape their appeal to meet the expectations of foreign corporations, Western governments and international lending institutions.

The old goals: Going into the round-table negotiations in February 1989, Solidarity had several clear-cut goals, including re-legalization, press freedom and progress toward political pluralism. Progress was indeed made: the political settle-

The market for socialism stays strong in the new Poland

ment calling for landmark elections and the recreation of the Senate took the opposition by surprise and overshadowed what should have been perhaps the most divisive issue in the discussions, namely the economy.

Although both government and opposition took the economic discussion seriously, neither side introduced a program of reform. After six weeks of round-table discussion the only real argument was on the indexation of prices and wages, eventually set at 80 percent. The communists had argued against the mechanism, citing, in typically Western fashion, the threat of inflation, while the official government trade union, OPZZ, took the populist position of 100 percent indexation. Solidarity, for its part, sought the middle ground and won. The discussants tepidly ratified the obvious: the debt should be dealt with, industry should be modernized, more competitive exports should be produced.

Eschewing issues: Given the scale and complexity of Poland's economic problems, reluctance to tackling the issue within the round-table format was understandable. For its part, the party had been presenting its version of an austerity program for years, with little popular support. Solidarity, meanwhile, was scrambling to assess the party's negotiating position and to quell dissension by striking workers and radical students while planning a strategy for the hastily scheduled June elections. We don't have time to put together an economic platform, Solidarity activists said time and again. It will have to wait until after the elections.

Self-management: Of course, it wasn't simply a matter of time. Solidarity had rejected the government's austerity program. “Accepting a domestic economic program of 300 percent price increases and the closing of unprofitable businesses would be political suicide,” according to opposition member of parliament Jan Maria Rokita. But Solidarity had no alternative program that could satisfy the various constituencies comprising the opposition.

In 1980-81, Solidarity looked to *samorząd* (“self-government”): worker-man-

aged enterprises patterned on the Yugoslav example were to represent the third way. Although Solidarity activists had different interpretations of *samorząd*, the emphasis was common: workers could solve the problems of productivity only by wresting power away from the party-dominated system of managerial *nomenklatura*.

According to some Solidarity economists, martial law and the failure of the Yugoslav economy deep-sixed *samorząd*. Harsh realities, in other words, had dispatched the trade union dream of worker-owned and -operated enterprises. With *samorząd* kaput, the free marketeers rushed to fill the gap, citing efficiency studies of Thatcherite privatization, calling for a convertible zloty and devising their own austerity measures.

Stefan Kawalec is one of these new Solidarity economists. Active in KOR (Workers' Defense Committee) in the '70s, Kawalec is now a lecturer at the Central School of Planning and Statistics, once the home of Stalinist economics and now a hotbed of economic “radicalism.” “There is no ideological conflict between Solidarity and a market economy,” Kawalec says, predicting that the Polish trade union will abandon its previously confrontational role and cooperate with the government as its Swedish and West German counterparts do. Although a leading theorist of privatization, Kawalec does not employ the anti-union rhetoric of his neoconservative Anglo-American brethren. He would not, for instance, support a law preventing strikes. Nevertheless, Kawalec sees privatization and the public ownership of industry through a stock market as the answer.

It is difficult to evaluate how influential Kawalec and his colleagues are. True, Kawalec's “grassroots” privatization plan appeared recently in *Zmiany*, a newspaper devoted, according to its masthead, to *samorząd*. And Kawalec's market reforms are more palatable to Solidarity than those of Janusz Korwin-Mikke, a “liberal-conservative” candidate in the June elections whose views landed him outside Solidarity orthodoxy. “For socialists, the more equality the better. For me, I prefer inequality,” he told a Polish newspaper during the elections. “Social justice simply doesn't exist!”

Still an option: Despite the proliferation of market theorizing, one thing is sure: *samorząd* is not dead. It just doesn't translate well into IMF speak and therefore isn't emphasized in Western press. According to some indications, *samorząd* still reigns supreme among Solidarity enthusiasts. Theoretician Szymon Jakubowicz, writing in the independent monthly *Wież*, explains that “the impulse toward *samorząd* is not uncommonly considered utopian.” He disagrees, however. “Our hopes,” Jakubowicz says, “are confirmed by the existence of independent self-managing enterprises that, despite great weaknesses and the weight of bureaucracy, manage to function.” Although typical sources such as the Polish Statistical Yearbook contain no information on *samorząd*, Jakubowicz

through his own research maintains that 5 to 15 percent of Polish workers belong to between 600 and 1,500 self-managed enterprises (the range is a function of different definitions of *samorząd*). Solidarity economists are presently studying data gathered concerning the functioning of these enterprises.

Despite the different tendencies within Solidarity, there is agreement on certain principles. Such as the necessity for foreign aid. On the eve of George Bush's July trip to Poland, Solidarity asked for \$10 billion in aid over three years. Did Solidarity really expect that Washington would enthusiastically endorse what would amount to a second Marshall Plan for Poland? Hardly?

The Polish government—regardless of composition—must demonstrate to foreign investors that it will not only improve on the record of its predecessors but also control the militant and well-organized Polish working class. “Wise” use of funds, according to the IMF, would entail creating (or, in some cases, recreating) industries that produce salable exports. Joint ventures that bring in technology employ workers but repatriate most profits are also to be encouraged. Debts can be rescheduled, but the IMF and Western banks ultimately want them back.

The result of austerity? Wages kept relatively low (to keep exports competitive), a proliferation of consumer goods that few consumers can afford (the path Hungary has already taken) and rising unemployment to keep inflation down and permit the restructuring of industry. This is what might be called the minimum negative effects of marketization. A worst-case scenario involving deteriorating health care, education, poverty, homelessness and other assorted supply-side ills might also take place.

If the Western left is naive about socialism as it exists in Poland, the Poles betray equal naiveté when it comes to capitalism.

Not only do Poles ignore the failures that lie at the heart of successful capitalism, they misunderstand the true misery caused by the unsuccessful variety as it is implemented especially in the Third World.

This naiveté conveniently obscures the austerity vs. social services dilemma. If Poland can fall no farther, then clearly social programs will not be dismantled. Social services are in fact almost taken as inalienable rights in Poland. Universal health care, pensioners' rights, job retraining and protection of wages from inflation aren't so much part of a Solidarity platform as the knee-jerk beliefs of the majority of Poles. Unless, or until, the now marginal “liberal-conservatives” in Poland establish a credible political presence, these elements of a welfare state will remain in place.

Which means that for the time being Solidarity can balance the brave new world of the market with the bad old world of centralized planning. “We want to take a lot from capitalism,” Lech Walesa recently said. “But we also want to take what's good from socialism.”

John Feffer, who recently returned from a six-month stint in Poland, is completing a book called *Beyond Detente*.

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Mailbag

Into my mailbox drops an envelope of the hue once described by Flann O'Brien as buff-colored puke. There are no identifying characteristics on its outer surfaces. It looks as though it could be a privately menacing communication from the IRS. I open it. It is a begging letter from WNET Thirteen, New York's "public" TV channel. The word "public" here has the same ironic timbre as in the designation "public schools" in England, meaning school available only to the rich and the privileged.

"Public" TV was set up originally to cater to groups unlikely to gain access to theoretically public airwaves held, more or less in perpetuity, by privately owned companies like CBS or ABC. As everyone knows, these "public" channels have now become the preserve of overpaid bureaucrats and right wingers, serviced by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a parastatal fungus of time-servers whose exclusive function is to keep any contentious or interesting material from the airwaves.

The nearest any ordinary person can get to Channel 13 is the well-guarded front door, where—if fortune smiles—Robin MacNeil may be seen alighting from his commodious limousine and plodding towards his sedative rendezvous with the American people. Channel 13's only achievement of note down the years has been to construct costly new offices for itself of a magnificence that would make a Hartford insurance company blush.

The communication I am holding in my hand, now removed from the envelope of buff-colored puke, is from Bill Baker, self-described "president" of Channel 13. It starts, "Frankly, intelligent TV is still a big risk." Down the side of the letter are milestones in Channel 13's career, indicating that the "risk" has been one judged by Channel 13 as too great to confront: 1970, *Wall Street Week*... 1977, *Dick Cavett Show*... 1979-85 Shakespeare's plays... 1982, *Nature*, which was followed rapidly in 1983 by the U.S. Supreme Bores, MacNeil and Lehrer, the tedium twins, the Exocets of Ennui, the Sinbads of Somnolence. Baker proudly proclaims that 1983 brought the world *The Constitution*, 1984 *The Brain* and 1986 (nothing seems to have happened in 1985) *The Story of English*. You'll notice that this is a reversal of priorities typical of Channel 13.

"Just like the corner deli," Baker writes "we depend for our very survival upon the passionate support of our community."

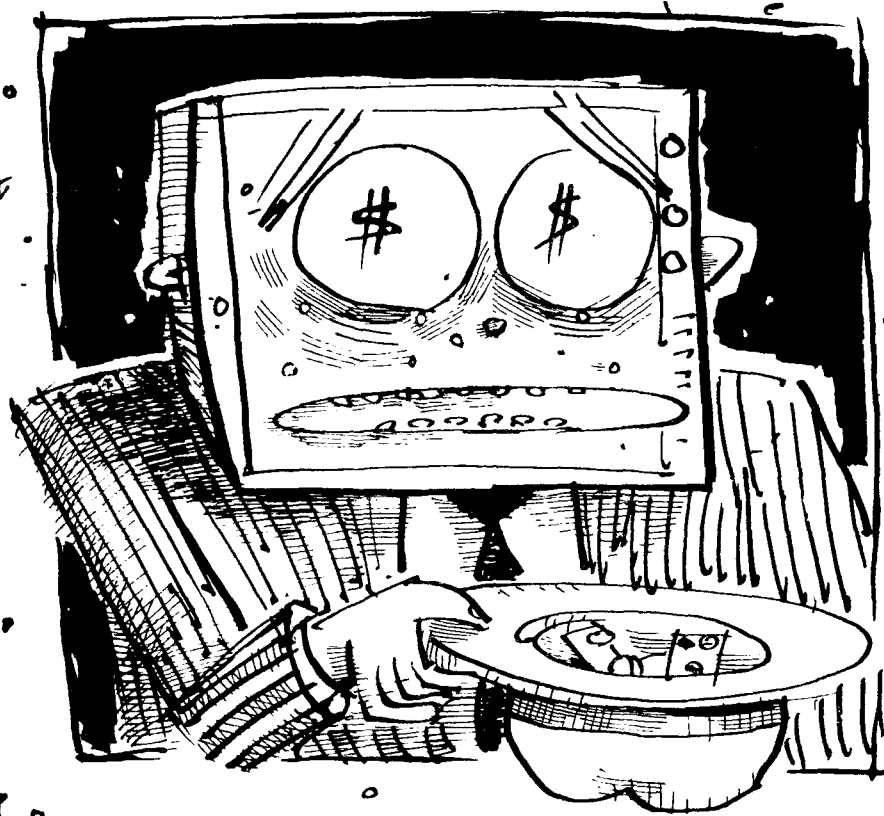
But delis offered varied fare, while these public TV stations depend for their very support on the laconic payoffs from big corporations like Exxon and IBM, who are delighted to have their generosity highlighted after a slice of some middle-brow naturalist talking about the mating rituals of the chipmunk.

Businessmen and public television executives love "nature," as pioneered by the Walt Disney "nature" films of the '40s, because it proposes a dog-eat-chipmunk philosophy akin to their own corporate ethic: survival, brute instinct, selfishness. Marx said it all in the *Grundrisse*: "The nature that preceded human history no longer exists anywhere."

"Our current season," Baker chirps, "is a virtual feast of the finest programs you'll see anywhere.... In honor of the 50th anniversary of the start of World War II, we'll bring you *Jimmy Doolittle: An American Hero*, *The Glenn Miller Band Reunion*, *How*

ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn



© 1989 Peter Hannan

Hitler Lost The War, Hirohito—Behind The Myth and Entertaining The Troops. In other words, the usual emollient paper. Why not *Cost Plus! How World War II taught Big Business to Diddle the Taxpayer: My Enemy, Mein Freund: How Standard Oil Dealt With Nazis: Saving Fascism, or How Roosevelt and Churchill threw out the Baby but kept the Bathwater; or Nigger! Class and Race in the Armed Forces: Some Black Gls Look Back*.

Accompanying Baker's interminable hollering for cash is a smaller card headlined "Guarantee: This entitles Alex Cockburn to an honorary membership in WNET Thirteen." It turns out that this "guarantee" is a pre-receipt for a proposed donation by me: \$50, which will pay for the left-hand front swivel screws on President Baker's private lavatory; and \$100, which will pay for 000001 seconds of commentary from the Sinbads of Somnolence. In return for this Baker promises to send me a navy tote bag which has "Thirteen" stenciled on the side so that I can become an ambulant billboard.

This smaller card advertises some future offerings, including *The Future of Medicine*, "a ten-part series exploring health and medical care in the 21st century," and *Shining Time Station*, "an innovative series starring Ringo Starr, which helps children better understand their often bewildering world." As usual this is the wrong way round. First Ringo should tell the kids about the fucked-up world they've been born into, and then *The Future of Medicine* should lay out the reasons why most of them will never be able to afford health care of any sort. Then Ringo can sing a verse from that fine old English hymn, "All Things Bright and Beautiful": "The rich man in his castle The poor man at his gate God made them high and lowly He ordered their estate."

Cow Milk Not Dow Milk (continued)

"The people lose every battle but the last," said Rosa Luxemburg. She was wrong.

A month ago I wrote about the attempts of Dow Chemical's subsidiary, Merrell Dow, to set up a pharmaceutical plant near where I grew up outside Killeagh, in east Cork, in the Irish Republic. At that point the company was planning to go ahead with construction of the plant at a cost of \$90 million, and the local opposition was about to embark upon hunger strikes and sit-ins to halt it.

On Labor Day the company threw in the towel. Merrell Dow announced it was abandoning the project, which had already cost \$5 million. The reason given was that a recent merger with Marion Laboratories required Dow to "make a complete reevaluation of its requirements"; also, Ireland's 10 percent corporate tax rate no longer offered "significant fiscal advantages."

In east Cork it's widely assumed that this was all face-saving boilerplate. The Irish government was becoming seriously concerned about the intensity of local opposition. The powerful National Farmers Association refused to accept "guarantees" of compensation if the Killeagh dairy farmers were ruined by pollution from the plant and was about to come out against the plant. ABC's *20/20* was on the verge of preparing a documentary which would have brought further bad publicity both to Dow and to

Ireland. It seems that the Irish government approached Merrell Dow privately and asked the company to hold off construction until the government promulgated a new environmental code next year. The company refused. Then the company's board, meeting in Cincinnati, decided to stop the whole project. Company officials said later that if there had not been significant local opposition delaying their plans, the plant would be up by now and nearing production.

This is a big victory for the greens. Back in the '70s the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of laws in the U.S. attempting to regulate pollution sent the worst offenders, notably pharmaceutical companies, overseas in search of a more benevolent political and regulatory climate. As a congressional committee observed, "Measures must be taken to prevent the mere displacement of killer industries to export platforms in non-regulating countries. Poverty and ignorance make communities in many parts of the world vulnerable to the exploitation implicit in hazardous export."

No less than a quarter of the waste produced by pharmaceutical companies is classified as hazardous, and three quarters of this hazardous waste is generated in the manufacture of basic ingredients. The U.S. companies relocated their active-ingredient plants to Puerto Rico and Mexico to serve the domestic mainland market and to Ireland to service the Common Market countries of Western Europe. Ireland is now one of the top ten producers of pharmaceutical products in the world. U.S. and Swiss companies reveled in the regulatory vacuum and gleefully reported in internal documents that protesters in Ireland were being ostracized by their neighbors and forced to move house. Illegal dumping was widespread.

The Merrell Dow victory shows all that has changed. The Irish state bureaucrats have suffered a humiliating defeat precisely on the old slogan of "jobs at any price." A two-thirds majority of people in a poor region of Ireland plagued by joblessness and emigration answered, "Not at that price." And Dow learned that in the late '80s people just don't believe a word pharmaceutical companies say about anything. People have found out the hard, hard way, but whether it's on the New Jersey shore or in east Cork or on the edge of Lake Baikal, they have learned that they must fight for the right to breathe clean air and have clean water, and that these battles can be won.

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**The Debt and the Deficit:
False Alarms/Real Possibilities**
By Robert Heilbroner and
Peter Bernstein
W.W. Norton & Company
144 pp., \$12.95

By Thomas Karier

Reagan rubble: debt valley days

IN 1988, ACCORDING TO A LOS ANGELES Times-Mirror Poll, the American public perceived the deficit as the most important problem of the day. And why not? Those Reagan deficits more than doubled the national debt in a few short years, generated billions in tax breaks for big business and the rich, and raised billions more for military contractors. The swollen debt remains one of the most conspicuous symbols of Reagan's morally and financially bankrupt administration.

In hindsight it's pretty clear that big business and their representatives in Washington conspired to pilage the public purse. First they increased the mammoth military budget to obscene proportions. According to the official budget (which ignores the CIA, NASA and veterans benefits) military outlays soared from \$134 billion in 1980 to \$273 billion in 1986. That accounts for about 70 percent of a \$200 billion "mega-deficit."

For corporations there were credits and tax cuts that brought the ef-

fective corporate income tax down from 36.5 percent in 1980 to 22.1 percent in 1986, costing the government \$40 billion in 1986 alone. This accounts for another 20 percent of a mega-deficit. The remainder can easily be accounted for by the generous Reagan tax cuts that slashed the tax rate for the highest income bracket from 70 percent in 1980 to 28 percent today.

A rich legacy: But the story doesn't end there. The shortfall between government expenditures and revenue had to be paid somehow.

ECONOMICS

One way is the inflationary solution of printing more money. The other way is to borrow the money by selling U.S. treasury bonds. But who's going to buy \$200 billion worth of new bonds? Essentially, its going to be corporations and the rich, since the top 1 percent of income earners are estimated to own 60 percent of bonds. And this, at the risk of oversimplifying, is the legacy of the Reagan deficits—big business and

the rich reaped the benefits of massive military expenditures and, in lieu of paying taxes, they loaned their tax payments to the government by buying its treasury bonds. It doesn't take a Nobel laureate to figure out that it's more profitable to loan a dollar to the government than to pay a dollar in taxes.

All this may seem pretty obvious, but it's necessary to review these basic facts before discussing *The Debt and the Deficit* by Robert Heilbroner and Peter Bernstein. In their hands, even the most basic facts can get twisted into entirely unrecognizable forms as they attempt "to reduce the deficit from the status of fright to that of an economic concern, to turn off the alarm bells." The danger of course is that without the alarm bells, the public credit card will continue to be abused with impunity.

The authors get off to a bad start by sliding over the military budget and tax cuts as causes for the deficit and instead zero in on "alarming increases" in Social Security payments and the abrupt end of inflation, as well as high government interest payments. The least plausible of these "causes" must be Social Security, which has been in surplus since 1982. Although there are good reasons to keep this budget separate from the general fund, when it is included it doesn't raise the deficit—it reduces it. Heilbroner and Bernstein focus on the large increases on the expenditure side but ignore the even larger increases on the revenue side.

Equally curious is their argument that high interest payments caused deficits when most reasonable people would see it the other way—large deficits caused high interest payments. Rising interest rates can account for only a fraction of the \$86 billion increase in federal interest payments between 1980 and 1987. Most of the increase is explained by annual deficits that piled up more debt than any period in U.S. history. In other words, if the deficits hadn't been created through military expansion and tax relief for the rich, interest payments would have hardly increased.

Voodoo II, the sequel: Finally, the authors mistakenly attribute the decrease in individual income taxes from \$618 billion in 1982 to \$600 billion in 1983 to the drop in inflation. It is true that inflation can automatically raise tax revenue by pushing taxpayers into higher brackets (if the tax is progressive), and it is equally true that tax revenue will not rise as fast when inflation slows down. But it is impossible for lower inflation to cause tax revenue to decline as

suggested by Heilbroner and Bernstein. To actually decrease tax revenues at a time when personal incomes are rising, it is necessary to cut tax rates—which is exactly what the Reagan team did.

Another major topic in *The Debt and the Deficit* is the variety of methods available for recalculating the size of the annual deficit. This may be the most important part of the book, not because Heilbroner and Bernstein have discovered a better way to measure the deficit but because these methods may someday be adopted by government statisticians in order to shrink the official deficit.

For example, \$31 billion was shaved off the 1987 deficit by adding in the surplus from Social Security and other trust funds. Social Security, unlike other items in the federal budget, has its own source of revenue and is scheduled to be in balance over the long run—generating a large surplus now and an equally large deficit in the next century. By including this surplus now, government accountants reduce the size of the federal deficit at the expense of making future deficits look even larger. This procedure doesn't eliminate any of the current deficit; it merely hides some of it until the next century.

Depending on how you measure it, the 1988 deficit can be as high as \$255 billion or as low as \$3 billion. The official deficit for that year is reported at \$155 billion, but if Heilbroner and Bernstein had their way, it would be only \$3 billion, which is hardly a deficit at all. The way they derive this figure is based on four ideas largely pioneered by Robert Eisner of Northwestern University.

First, federal debt purchased by other government agencies, like

It doesn't take a Nobel laureate to figure out that it's more profitable to loan a dollar to the government than pay a dollar in taxes.

the Federal Reserve and Social Security do not contribute to the deficit. Second, federal expenditures on non-military capital goods should be amortized over the life of the investment. Third, inflation reduces the real national debt, and these reductions can be subtracted from the annual deficit. And fourth, the surpluses of state and local governments offset deficits in the federal budget.

While all of these are reasonable concerns and are likely to reduce the impact of the deficit on the macroeconomy, they essentially miss the point—the federal govern-

ment spent \$127 to \$220 billion more each year since 1983 than they brought in from taxes, causing a major increase in federal borrowing and interest payments. Whether this is measured in real or relative terms, it's still a sizable increase from the pre-Reagan era.

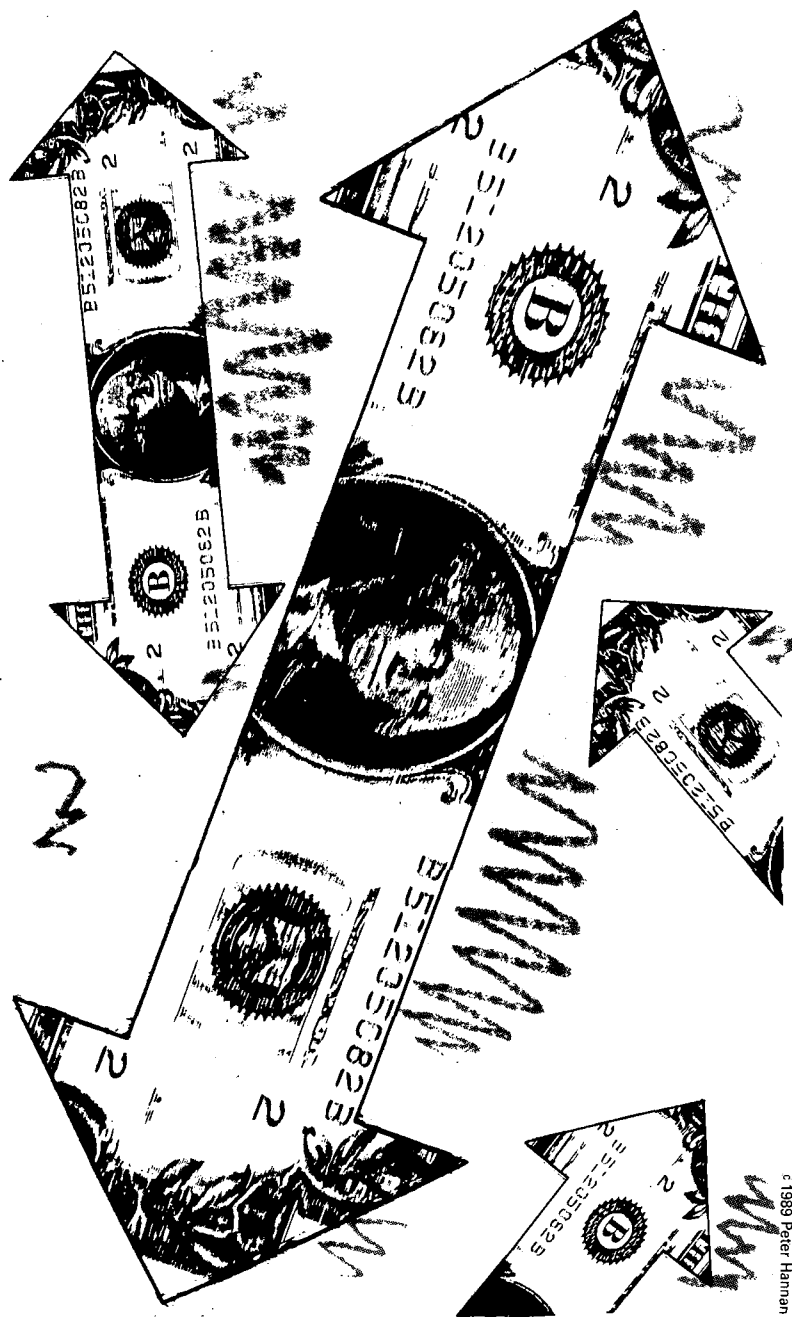
Economic uppers and downers: Heilbroner and Bernstein are correct in pointing out that the deficits haven't brought the economy "crashing down about our ears," but then deficits seldom do. Deficit spending, like amphetamines, generally pushes capitalist economies to ever-increasing highs during economic expansions. And in this area the government had help from consumers and corporations. Growth in consumer credit and mortgages rose at the spectacular annual rate of 10.6 percent in real terms from 1980 to 1986, while corporate debt followed close behind at 10.1 percent.

The real innovation of Reaganomics was how to absorb this massive credit without igniting inflation. The solution was a tight money policy, which, like a barbiturate, constrained the growth in the economy by maintaining high interest rates. Tight money made it possible for the economy to absorb these massive influxes of government, consumer and corporate credit without setting off the usual inflationary sirens.

While credit can push the U.S. economy to ever-greater heights during times of relative prosperity, it also threatens to plunge it to greater depths during ensuing recessions. The right combination of amphetamines and barbiturates may strike a balance temporarily, but the cumulative effect is to weaken a body and leave it prone to future maladies. The immediate danger lies in mortgage payments that can't be made and corporate interest charges that can't be met. The incredible multibillion-dollar savings and loan crisis should be a warning of what happens when credit goes bad—and remember—the recession hasn't begun yet.

What will happen when the economy slows, when consumers and businesses are simultaneously caught overextended, when entire industries clamor for government bailouts, when rising unemployment demands a fresh injection of even larger government expenditures, when falling national income causes tax revenues to fall? Will these pressures, which surely await the federal government during the next twist in the business cycle, incite the government to raise taxes or to borrow more from the elite? Unfortunately Heilbroner and Bernstein are too bent on assuaging the public's debt anxiety to ask these critical questions.

Thomas Karier teaches in the Jerome Levy Economics Institute at Bard College.



Our Own Time: A History of American Labor and the Working Day
By David R. Roediger and Philip S. Foner
Verso Books, 425 pp., \$19.95

By George Lipsitz

IN HIS DRAMATIC SPEECH AT THE 1988 Democratic National Convention, Jesse Jackson brought the crowd to its feet with a moving description of the working poor. "Don't call them lazy," Jackson cautioned. "They work every day." His eloquent reminder of the hard hours of toil demanded of workers in these anti-labor times rebuked the dominant neoconservative ideology of the

LABOR

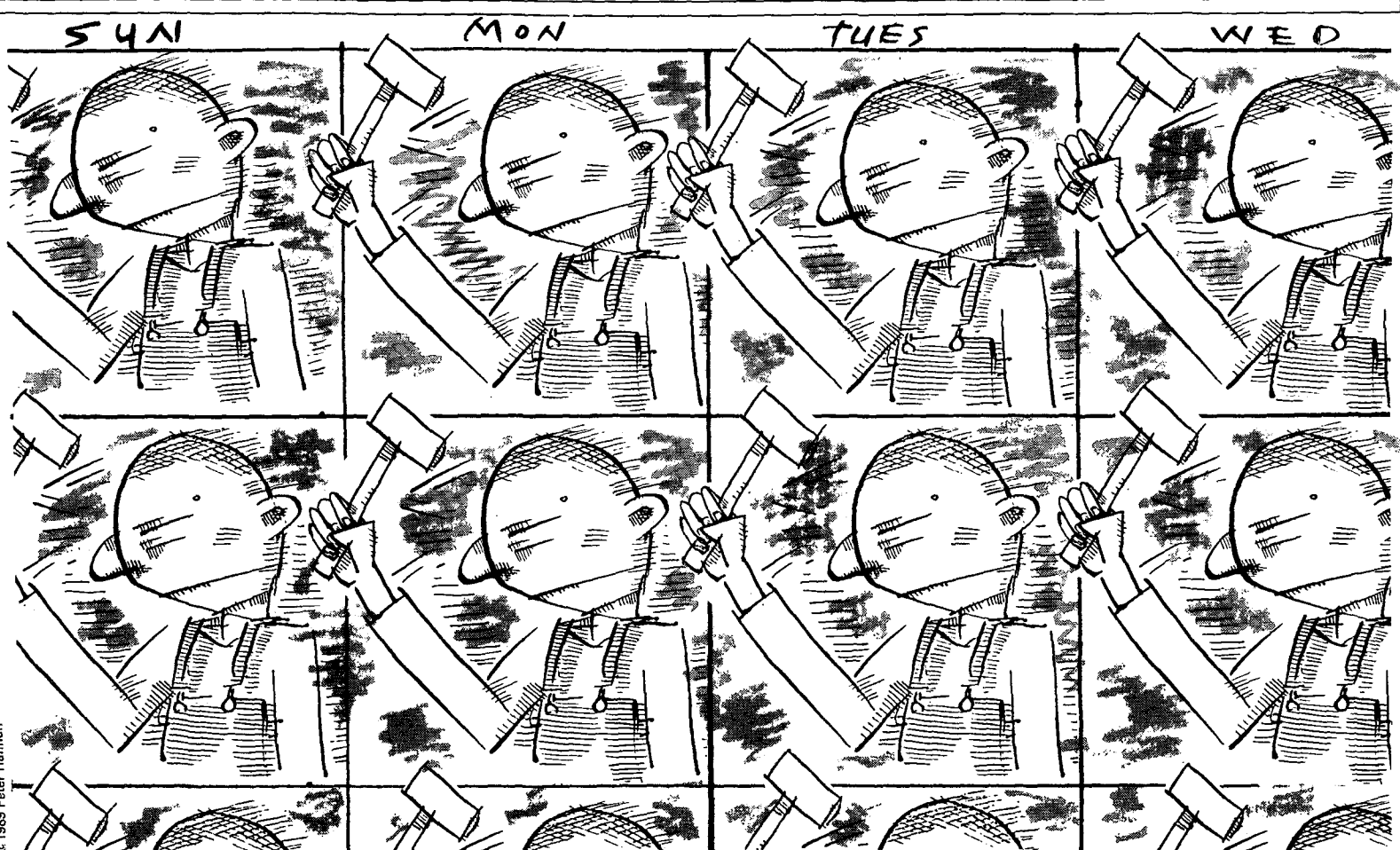
'80s, an ideology that blames the indolence of the working class for the devastation caused by de-industrialization and Reaganomics.

But it is not just the poor who labor every day. As David Roediger and Philip Foner point out in their new book, *Our Own Time*, Americans as a rule spend more time on the job than workers in most other industrialized countries. And the ratio of paid hours to total life has increased significantly since 1948. Thus a workforce chastised by neo-conservatives for having "lost" the work ethic actually works longer hours for less reward than did their parents. In addition, our society—often indicted for offering too much destructive leisure time—is actually one of decreasing leisure for most.

All work and no play: As in so many other areas, neoconservative formulations about work and leisure succeed because too many of us know too little about our history. We know too little about the history of the working day, about the unremitting and underrewarded toil coerced out of American workers for centuries by the most miserly employer class of any industrialized nation. No group of employers in history got as much productive labor from their workforce as American capitalists did, and none were as stingy in their concessions about hours and working conditions. Yet American workers won real victories (especially during World War I and World War II) that put some limits on the duration of the working day.

Roediger and Foner locate their discussion of the working day in the context of centuries of struggle by American workers to lessen their hours of labor. They argue that the length of the working day has been "the central issue raised by the American labor movement during its most dynamic periods of organization."

The struggle for a 10-hour day led to mass strikes and demonstrations as early as the Jacksonian Era, and the movement for an eight-hour day provided an essential impetus for working-class politics between the Civil War and World War I. Strikes by Western miners over the eight-hour day in the early 1900s led to



Hours not to reason why, hours just to work and die

"class war on a grand scale," but victory came only in the wake of intense shop-floor activism and classwide political mobilization in the periods of full employment during the two world wars. Perhaps most intriguing is the authors' discussion of the popularity of shorter-hours demands among women and the implications of the traditions of fighting about the duration of the working day for the contemporary female labor force.

Roediger and Foner explain why the movement for shorter hours held the allegiance of workers through so many difficult years. They show how the movement reflected more than a simple reaction against the indignities of arduous toil, however understandable and just such a reaction would have been. The demand for shorter hours with no reduction in pay was an economic demand in that it asked for wealth to be redistributed to the working class, and it also aimed at lowering unemployment by requiring more workers. But it was also a cultural demand for more and better leisure.

Control of leisure: Workers seeking a limit on laboring hours articulated a need for full participation in public life, participation that for them hinged upon time for individual and group education, the opportunity for better health, and the vigor to take on the burdens of civic activities. In repeated instances of shop-floor militancy and political mobilization, they prefigured what the politics of an emancipated working class might be like.

The movement for shorter hours not only produced unprecedented cooperation between skilled and un-

skilled laborers and between men and women workers. It also brought forth the right to control leisure time off the job as equally important to efforts designed to win power on the shop floor or at the state legislature.

Addressing recent scholarly research about labor and leisure, Roediger and Foner reject the con-

munications scholars who see leisure and consumption as structured activities every bit as necessary to postindustrial societies as labor was to industrial societies. According to Roediger and Foner, these interpretations overestimate the prescience and generosity of management and underestimate the bitter struggles

Today's workforce—chastised by neoconservatives for having "lost" the work ethic—actually works longer hours for less reward.

clusions of social historians who have seen limits on the working day as part of a coordinated top-down strategy by capitalists to increase consumer spending, and similarly they dismiss the contentions of com-

waged by workers for more and better leisure time.

Not all readers will be convinced by the authors' arguments, and even those who are may wish that more time and space was devoted to the

consumer and leisure activities in the late-industrial and postindustrial America of our own day. But all readers will benefit from the initiative and imagination of this splendid book, which, like all good history, returns to the past in order to re-frame our understanding of the present.

Just over a century ago, in the midst of dramatic political agitation for limiting the working day to eight hours, Edward Bellamy envisioned a humane and rational future society in which work depended upon the difficulty of the task that needed to be accomplished rather than upon one person's ability to extract profit out of another's work. For all the technological "progress" of society and for all the real gains won by popular struggle in the past hundred years, Roediger and Foner remind us that we still have a long way to go in winning the concessions necessary for meaningful and just labor and leisure.

George Lipsitz teaches in the American studies program at the University of Minnesota.



New Wives' Tales



By J. Poet

BRAZILIAN SINGER-SONGWRITER Gilberto Gil is one of his country's most popular exports. His albums—a sizzling musical gumbo of samba, reggae, funk, rock, African pop and Brazilian folk forms—sell millions of copies in Europe, Asia and South America. Last year he used his appeal as an entertainer to capture a seat on the city council of Salvador da Bahia, his hometown.

"I wanted to run for mayor," Gil said by phone from Miami, the first stop of his current North American tour, "but the party would not indicate me for that position. Instead I ran for city council, and I was elected."

Gil says that Brazil presents itself to the world as a smoothly running, multiracial society but in reality there is still much inequality. "More than 80 percent of the people in Brazil are of African descent. And everybody knows that blacks and mestizos, people of mixed blood, get a bad deal, but most people, even the few blacks that have been elected over the years, choose to ignore the inequalities. I'm the first one ever elected with an agenda for defending black culture."

Elected, eclectic, electric: Gil has used his position on the city council to support programs and cultural organizations for black performing artists and to bring the plight of black Brazilians to the attention of the federal government in

Gil's government groove

Brasilia. "The government says that they want to give the people a break," Gil says skeptically. "We'll see how sincere they are."

The singer has reason to be cynical. In 1969 Gil and his partner in rhyme, singer Caetano Veloso, spent several months in jail for writing and recording anti-government lyrics.

BRAZIL

"Musically that was a very exciting time," Gils recalled. "Dylan and the Beatles were combining American and English cultural music, folk songs and even some classical forms with loud rock guitars and socially conscious lyrics to make a more modern sound. They inspired the student movements in France and the States and made an international protest music. At that time the military had seized power in Brazil, and people like Caetano and myself were searching for a way to address this situation. We wanted to find a new way to approach the youth of Brazil in the same way that the protest singers in the United States did, to be politically and culturally subversive, to use new melodies and rhythms."

"Joao Gilberto and the composers who developed bossa nova had already introduced a more adult, more cosmopolitan style. They dealt with love in an almost existential way and

renovated the language of popular song in Brazil. They called it the 'Intellectual Samba.' To make our 'Protest Samba,' we built on that, added some rock'n'roll, some soul, some folk music and the older African-based rhythms of my hometown of Bahia. We wanted to make people aware of the international protest movements, to make them see how our political problems related to the world situation."

Gil and Veloso called their music "Tropicalia," but their cultural subversion succeeded too well; they were imprisoned and expelled from the country. Gil says that he had no doubts about the government's intentions. "The military had taken power, there was trouble in the jungle with anti-government guerrillas and they were trying to keep everything under control. If we hadn't been well-known entertainers, I'm certain we would have been tortured or killed."

Instead Gil and Veloso were driven to the airport and put on a plane for London. "After jail, we were placed under house arrest until they decided to banish us. They let us do one final concert to make some money, then they drove us to the airport with our guitars."

In London, exile Gil mixed with rock, reggae and African musicians, which rapidly expanded his musical horizons. "Many reggae musicians

moved to London in the early '70s because the economic situation was better than in Jamaica, and I got to meet and play with them. Black people all over the world have much in common, so when I heard reggae and later African music, I decided to use it. The music gets into your blood, and you can't avoid it."

Returning the favor: In 1972 the government of Brazil asked Gil to return home, promising him complete artistic and political freedom. "They'd gotten rid of the guerrillas, and they were confident enough to allow some freedom of expression. They probably thought that if they allowed the people to have their music, it would keep them engaged, keep their minds off of their problems."

Gil had several tracks on the recent David Byrne compilation *Beleza Tropical* (see *In These Times*, May 3). Did that exposure do him any good? "It may have helped a little," Gil said, "but some of my American releases did almost as well." Gil feels that in the long run, the current North American interest in world music will be more important to him and other Brazilian artists. "Music from the United States has always had a big impact on the music in Brazil. Now that people here are finally beginning to get interested in our music, maybe we can return the favor."

On Gil's latest record, *O Eterno Deus Mu Dança*, set for autumn release on Celluloid records, the singer continues his exploration of world music. The album is packed with the sambas, reggae, rock and protest

songs that have made Gil one of his country's most important spokesmen. There's even a song addressed to Bob Dylan, Bob Marley and Michael Jackson. ("De Bob Dylan & Bob Marley...")

"After Dylan Christianized," Gil explains, "he began recording reggae too, which helped bring together blacks, Christians and Jews. And I believe that Bob Marley died because Rastamen believe that blacks and Jews are both oppressed by Babylon. At the same time Michael Jackson is popular because he is going whiter and whiter with each album, which is sad. This isn't my whole opinion of Jackson, but many people say that to me, and as a writer I have need to reflect what people are feeling."

Gil isn't likely to forget the feelings of those less fortunate than himself. Musically and lyrically, his albums continue to showcase the same international concerns that got him in trouble in the '60s. And so far, he's been able to balance his chores as a lawmaker with his career as a singer. "People didn't think an entertainer could be effective in government," Gil said, "but so far, so good. The elite still fear the sharing of power, they defend their interests, but we'll work it out. We must support the concept of plurality. A multiracial, multicultural society will be stronger. And no matter what happens to me, the concept of the power of the people will survive."

J. Poet writes regularly about pop music.

By Jeff Pike

IN A DOWN-HOME CREOLE CAFE JUST north of Seattle's industrial district, Peter Case is shaking his head. A dozen or so nickels are at his elbow, scattered across the red and white checkerboard oilcloth covering the table. Everything within reach seems to be a treasure unearthed in a New Orleans thrift store. Posters, handbills and framed pictures cover the walls with images of Fats Waller, Louis Jordan, Jesse Jackson, Hubert Humphrey and more.

"This is the greatest jukebox in the world," Case keeps saying over and over, shaking his head. Already he's played Big Maybelle and Etta James tunes; now Howlin' Wolf's "Mary Sue" is just ending. Every third song Case grabs more nickels—the jukebox only takes nickels—and spends more time hunched over the selections, rubbing his chin and laughing at his range of choices.

"Hey, they've got a Clifford Brown single here," he calls over to the table. "Can you believe that? Can you imagine going down to the record store and getting a Clifford Brown single?" A minute later, a silky trumpet playing incredibly fast bop lines sounds across the restaurant.

Peter Case, 35, is something of an enigma in pop music. Part charismatic Bono Vox and part reclusive Jack Kerouac, virtually nothing the Los Angeles-based singer-songwriter did

Single going steady: strum und drang

with his early-'80s band, the Plimsouls, anticipated the direction of his solo career, which to date constitutes two albums and a long series of solo appearances in every imaginable kind of venue, accompanying himself with only acoustic guitar and harmonica.

"In the last three years, I've played the Saturday night bar out there in America solo," he says. "I opened big concerts for Jackson Browne solo

FOLK MUSIC

and shows for the Replacements and Hüsker Du. I've played Christian audiences solo—I love playing for Christians. I've played record stores and coffeehouses and in the street. Tonight I'm playing a boat."

Solo man: Where the Plimsouls rocked monotonous, Peter Case articulates dark, stirring spiritual parables. Where the Plimsouls contributed to brat-pack movies (*Valley Girls*), Peter Case contributes to Sam Shepard plays (*Live in Miami*). Where the Plimsouls erred on the side of a party-hearty know-nothing mindset, Peter Case errs on the side of earnest goodwill.

At their best, the songs on Peter

Case's new album, *The man with the Blue postmodern fragmented neo-traditionalist Guitar* (Geffen), are a powerful and unshrinking statement of hope. Acceptance and community ("Travellin' Light"), the eternal renewals of romance ("Old Part of Town"), the poignance of overcoming loneliness ("Entella Hotel"), even the mysterious therapy that comes from talking to another ("Charlie James," a traditional blues number transformed to Case's purposes) are showcased in a rich mix of ringing acoustic guitars, atmospheric keyboards, a thumping rhythmic attack and Case's homely, unadorned singing.

It's hard to figure what could possibly be considered postmodern about the new album, Case's first since his impressive 1986 debut. Today's much-abused artistic con-

Peter Case: The man with the dark New overtitled deeply felt major label Album.

ceit, I-R-O-N-Y, is altogether missing from the music. "The title is just a joke, something to make my friends laugh," he says. "It could have been called 'The man with the Blue post-Reagan disenfranchised homeless make-my-day read-my-lips surcharge Guitar.'"

Accompanied by a familiar cast that includes Mitchell Froom, David Hidalgo, Benmont Tench, T-Bone Burnette and Ry Cooder, Peter Case pours all his heart into songs that tell stories about people reaching out to connect with others.

Case's lack of affectation lends the songs a refreshing and invigorating force. If they occasionally veer toward cloying, it's all in a day's work for this reincarnated beatnik and born-again Christian, whose tumbling, streaming, passionate lyrics owe no small allegiance, however indirectly inherited, to Walt Whitman, the great beat father.

Radical rambling: "I don't know if I consider myself a poet, but I guess I'm part of a songwriting tradition," he says, reluctantly discussing the sources of his work. "I mean, I dropped out in ninth grade, so I never got any formal literary education. The things I love best are the great songs of love, life and death that come out of places like Ireland and Texas." But a few minutes later, he's offering insights into a short story by Herman Melville.

As for his politics, Case declares flatly, "I don't believe in radical right

and left. I believe in radical truth and radical charity and compassion. The point isn't to create a huge rift in this country between left and right. The point is to face the facts. And the facts are that the cattle-drive mentality applied to foreign policy is not going to work anymore. The way they're trying to deal with the economy is not going to work anymore. You can talk about a kinder, gentler nation, but your actions have to show that. I don't hate George Bush, but I think he's really out of it. There's no real compassion there. They're treating people's lives like a shell game."

Another song ends. Case grabs nickels and jumps up again. "Oh, hey," he calls. "they've got 'Money's Gettin' Cheaper'—you know, that Jimmy Witherspoon song?"

Then he's back at the table again. "Listen to this song," he instructs. "It's great. It's classic." He starts reciting lines from it: "Times gettin' tougher than tough Things gettin' rougher than rough I make a lot of money Just keep spendin' the stuff." That's still true today," he says, "more true than ever. You know this one?" he asks. Just then, the big Hammond organ sound kicks in and fills the tiny restaurant.

Peter Case is shaking his head with pleasure again. "You know, it's really true what Duke Ellington said. There's only two kinds of music: good and bad."

Jeff Pike is a writer living in Seattle.

Film

Continued from page 24

a white journalist (Susan Sarandon).

There is plenty that doesn't work about *A Dry White Season*. There are, for instance, gigantic plot holes. In a story that underlines the ferocity and diligence of the police, the black activist Stanley keeps popping up as if no one were watching him. And the dramatic ending smacks of false catharsis, an easy one-shot ending to a struggle that in fact is just beginning.

The graphic portrayals of police torture—played not for exploitation horror but more as evidence that presages the schoolteacher's coming to awareness—may strike some viewers as excessive. And that's a judgment call. It's not enough to say that real life is worse—which it is. The issue in question is effectiveness. For the record, it wasn't too much for me, but for some members of my viewing audience it went over the boundaries of what they were ready to believe.

Finally, the film differs stylistically from Palty's earlier *Sugar Cane Alley*, a lushly photographed drama of a young black boy's coming of age in Martinique. *A Dry White Season* sacrifices elegance to occasionally crude storytelling in an action mode. This is a suspense drama about a man trying to solve a mystery—superficially the mystery of a wrongful death, actually the mystery of his own lifelong mystification. The story sometimes works better at the first level.

Common ground: With every consideration given to its failings, however, *A Dry White Season* is one of the decade's most interesting films on political issues. It succeeds despite a superficial resemblance to *Cry Freedom* and the more effective *A World Apart* (its subject matter is apartheid, its major character is a white person and its major drama that person's struggle to engage the problem).

Like *A World Apart*, it is distinguished by an unflinching approach to the social realities of South Africa. But it goes far beyond that film by entering substantially into the world of the martyred black family. We see tensions within the black township over what is possible and what is right, tensions that also burst out in family arguments.

But where *A Dry White Season* excels is in exploring the process of discovery (and self-discovery) on the part of the willful naïf. As he pushes toward consciousness, he discovers the community of resisting whites. And he faces the justified suspicion of blacks. He also uncovers the roots of unknowing. In a climactic scene, his wife (Janet Suzman) admits that she knows apartheid is wrong. But there's her family to think of, and her own culture. She points to "the rest of Africa—it's a mess," and warns him that blacks will "swallow us up." "It's like in war," she says. "You have to choose sides. You have to choose your own people."

He responds, "I have to choose the truth." And for someone whose innocence was so carefully armored before, that's psychologically right. Ben Du Toit moves from complacency to outrage and finally grasps what Stanley and McKenzie have tried to tell him—that the legal system of an unjust state cannot be the vehicle of justice.

A Dry White Season's message goes beyond the messages of earlier fiction features on South Africa—the awareness of injustice. It not so subtly argues, through the lives and deaths of its characters, that the time has passed for remedies within the system.

It does not, however, paint an entirely bleak picture. Aside from the courageous en-

durance and cooperation of resisters both black and white, it also holds out promise in the shape of Ben's legacy to his son. *A Dry White Season's* uncompromising political position may make it strong stuff for audiences committed to a middle ground, but this also makes it a film whose implications are thoroughly troubling and thought-provoking.

When we left the screening of *A Dry White Season*, one of my companions said in a shocked voice, "Why don't we hear more about this?" We do, of course, hear something "about this," although many of us choose not to notice. But we don't hear enough because of the South Africa government's news censorship. That's being undercut by the weekly television newsmagazine *South Africa Now*, being shown on many public TV and cable channels and available from Globalvision (361 W. Broadway, New York, NY 10013). *South Africa Now* breaks the boycott every week with 30 minutes of hard news, features and cultural reporting. If your public TV station or cable service doesn't carry it, now is the time to tell them to subscribe.

The road to hell: If *Dry White Season* alienates some viewers with its uncompromising stance, *Romero* alienates most of them by compromising. Not because it isn't well intentioned. It's so loaded down with good intentions that it sinks.

Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero, murdered in 1980 while conducting Mass, was at the center of political conflict in El Salvador. Romero is also one of the most revered Catholic figures in Latin America, widely regarded (though not officially recognized) as a saint. This movie, produced by

Ellwood Kieser, C.S.P., whose earnest TV series *Insight* also attempts to use mass media to further the aims of the Paulist order (dedicated to spreading the Gospel to the unconverted), gives you the saint and leaves out the politician.

Romero sticks pretty close to external fact—for instance, that Romero was initially regarded by conservatives as a safe choice in a country where many priests had taken up with liberation theology; that Romero, a personal friend of the powerful, faced them down once right wingers began murdering priests; and that it was the right that murdered him. It also shows that El Salvador is divided between the many very poor and few very rich.

But scriptwriter John Sacret Young (co-creator of *China Beach* and scriptwriter for the mini-series *A Rumor of War*) and Australian director John Duigan have missed the personal in the political. The central character of Romero never psychologically engages the situation he's thrown into.

Romero came to his position convinced that the correct role of the church was in the church. He became openly political, for instance, serving as the unofficial adviser of the military leaders of the October 1979 coup and calling on the Christian Democrats to leave the government in early 1980. In his homilies Romero denounced not just violence (both left and right) but also the social order, which he saw as violent toward the poor in everyday life. He defended the right of people to take up arms to defend themselves and called openly on soldiers to disobey orders. In short, Romero became the kind of archbishop who makes the current pope incredibly nervous.

The Romero of this movie, by contrast, is a gentle, bookish, rather neurotic soul who sorrowfully, steadfastly and courageously hews to a line of non-violence and Christian justice. Gone is the Romero of insider politics, although he is seen calling for an end to violence on both sides and the murder scene borrows from one of his earlier homilies the remarks that probably were his death sentence.

The bookish integrity with which Romero leaves his study at the outset of the film becomes the stalwart integrity of the priest who must visit the prisons. Raul Julia does his best by a non-part, trying to create a sense of tension with silence, repressed gestures and stoicism. But he's given no help by his role. We never get to see what it means to Romero not just to stand up to authorities but to violate his own longstanding beliefs.

The filmmakers have repeatedly denied that *Romero* is a political film, and they're right. However, they also hoped that by pitching their drama to a broad entertainment-oriented audience the film would promote "justice and freedom for the people of El Salvador," and in that they may be disillusioned. Their story, according to press materials, is that "of a weak and wounded man who is dragged kicking and screaming into heroism, but who finally lets go and surrenders his life to God." We never see that transformation—he's not weak, just untested, when the movie begins—because the political dynamic that drove it is gone. In its place is the story of a cardboard saint in a world of evil. Boredom will overtake the audiences who might have resisted a more forthrightly political tale.

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Filmmaker Euzhan Palcy compromises without losing her soul

A few words with director Euzhan Palcy about making *A Dry White Season*.

On working with MGM: "I think I am a privileged director. It is very rare for a studio to produce a film, give the director control over the final product and then bring a director back and ask them about promotion. I consider my experience with the studio an accident, and I'm not sure it will ever happen again. I don't have any aspiration to become a Hollywood director."

On her choice to work with a major studio: "When I started thinking about the film, I wasn't waiting on Hollywood. But the problem is that the independent producers don't have much money. I am upset about the black community. In the black community there are people who have money, who are not in show business. I would appreciate it if they would realize that if we want films from a black perspective, we need black filmmakers."

On making a film about apartheid with a white lead character: "Of course, you cannot make a film about apartheid and exclude the whites, because the whites are the cause of apartheid. I wanted to talk about apartheid from the black perspective with black leads."

"But the people who have the money and the power to make the films don't give the damn about black lead roles, except if it's a big comedy and the lead is a black person who can make money for them. That's why Harry Belafonte has had a project about South Africa from the black perspective for five years."

"When I read Andre Brink's novel, I saw immediately the compromise I could

make without losing my soul. The main idea of the book was that it is not enough that one man comes to awareness. I tried to show that man seeing the truth and deciding to make a stand will not change anything by itself. At the end, it is the blacks who go on, and the blacks also welcome the Afrikaners who wake up. It's not enough that the whites wake up but it's important. Ben du Toit's death is not important. What is important is what happens next, with the next generation."

"And I beg you to note that this is the first time in a major motion picture from Hollywood that a black man kills a white man and that is the end of the story."

On a scene she scripted in which Gordon's son tells him why he will join the Soweto protests in spite of his father's wishes, pointing out that his father, a community leader, is only a gardener: "I wanted specifically the white audience to realize why the children were in the street. When the police react violently to the kids, it is easy to get the feeling that they are probably troublemakers. So I wanted the audience to understand fully why the kids were in the streets and why there were killed like that."

"Secondly, I wanted the audience to see the black man in the same way we see the white man in his family. I wanted to show how as a black man he is respected by his community; he has a loving family, he is a very dignified man. This is a man from another time who decided to submit himself to the system, but that doesn't mean he didn't know what is going on. He made a choice many black people

made before 1976, before the kids said, 'That's enough, you already paid the price.'"

On working with some of South Africa's best actors: "I didn't want to cast American actors when South African actors could speak for themselves. When I approached them, though, I said, 'If this is too dangerous for you, I can cast Americans.' But they explained that being black in South Africa is always a risk, being in the film wouldn't make it any worse."

"And they told me that it was the first time they had read a script so faithful to the reality of South Africa. The fact that Ben Du Toit was the lead never bothered them. They told me the film is important for international audiences because they know we are fighting to survive but they don't know why the system exists and they don't know that some of the whites are victims of their own system."

On the violence in the film: "You don't talk about apartheid without being honest. If you cannot, do something else. You must not say as a filmmaker, I don't want Americans to dislike it. They have *Rambo* and can see all the blood and violence there. But in my film the violence is not exploitative or manipulative. It's the truth in the context of the film."

"If audiences cannot take it, then maybe it will make them think. If they are in a theater in a democratic country and they cannot stand to see it, then what about the real people who are going through it? It's real hell, after all, it's not just a film."

-P.A.

Germany

Continued from page 8

country." Since the GDR had eased travel restrictions, he thought it would have been "more foresighted and responsible" to seek to extend legal rights rather than look for holes to jump through. Running away impedes progress toward a state based on law, he said.

Schorlemer complained that the FRG basic law, by providing instant citizenship to people from the GDR, "makes it too easy" for East Germans to run away from any trouble, even personal.

He could talk. He was staying. For those living in the West, criticism of the immigrants was hazardous.

Last month, while the controversy was heating up, Harald Wolf and Peter Lohaus of the West Berlin Alternative List (Greens) issued a statement calling for formal recognition of the two German states and amendment of the citizenship law to put East Germans on the same footing with Austrians or Swiss: that is, free to enter the country but without automatic citizenship privileges. Bonn's "reunification rhetoric" and policy of "considering all GDR citizens as frustrated citizens of the FRG, is turning into a main obstacle for the *perestroika* in the GDR that the West German side is clamoring for," they wrote. The Bonn policy encourages East Germans to find "an individual way out" of the stultifying situation in the GDR while enabling GDR leaders to relieve social dissatisfaction by channeling it westward.

This set off a furious controversy among the Greens. In their devotion to the right of asylum, the Greens have tended to take a maximalist position on immigration, coming

out for "open borders." At the same time, they tend to be hostile to any sign of German nationalism in general and to calls for German reunification in particular. These two attitudes, both inherited from systematic anti-Nazism, put them in a bind when it comes to the East German refugee question.

In West Berlin, both the Greens and the SPD maintained their support for the "two-state solution." SPD Mayor Walter Momper said his "red-green" coalition was sticking to the policy of step-by-step improvements in the face of hollow "reunification rhetoric."

Outside Berlin, however, neither Social Democrats nor Greens seemed eager to follow this line.

Equal plights: Does mass exodus weaken the chances of reforms? Would, on the other hand, reforms reduce the impulse to mass exodus? There is a widespread assumption on the left that reforms would make people want to stay and thus solve the problem.

Last month, the SED's top theorist, Otto

Reinhold, declared bluntly that "the GDR is different" from Poland or Hungary in that it has no national identity to fall back on and no reason to exist except as "an anti-fascist socialist alternative" to the FRG.

The GDR's self-justifying difference lies precisely in its social policies: good education and jobs for everybody, stable prices and relatively equal distribution of income. These features would likely be undermined by free-market reforms being advanced in Poland and Hungary. But they are also undermined by the attraction of West Germany's unequal wage scales to those in the East German workforce able to earn more in a system with less social equality. That is the GDR's basic problem, the problem that built the Berlin Wall in 1961 and (according to Reinhold) paralyzes the SED today. Can an egalitarian society exist alongside a freely accessible inegalitarian one? What if the answer is simply no?

A modern economy needs highly skilled

workers. Must it sacrifice egalitarianism to bid for them with higher pay and privileges? But what of that part of the GDR population that appreciates the egalitarian aspects and would oppose seeing them "reformed" away?

"The decisive question," wrote Willy Brüggem of the Berlin Alternative List in a contribution to the ongoing debate, is this: "Does the reform process in Eastern Europe amount to a modernization guided by an independent socialist development logic, or is it finally only a return to the Western camp? If it should turn out that democratization and modernization are impossible on a socialist basis, would this mean that *perestroika* in the GDR is to be had only at the price of self-liquidation?"

Brüggem asked: "How would we react if, in the face of serious reforms and their economic consequences, millions more East Germans decided to flee?"

Nobody knows the answers to these questions.

Norway

Continued from page 11

A combination of overconsumption in the '70s and early '80s and the collapse of world oil prices in 1986 plunged Norway's heavily oil-dependent economy into a deep recession. The government's tighter monetary policies have helped check overconsumption, increased savings, lowered nominal interest rates and rectified a balance of trade deficit. But real interest rates remain high and unemployment has soared to 4 percent, low by world standards, but a postwar record in Norway.

Losses of Labor: Although most economists say the country has turned the

corner on its economic difficulties, voters' discontent over lingering problems caused trouble for both the Conservative and Labor parties on election day.

The Labor Party managed to hold on as the largest of Norway's six represented parties with 34 percent of the vote, thanks largely to the personal popularity of Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. But it still lost nearly a sixth of its voters and eight seats compared to 1985. Conservatives had even more disastrous results, losing more than a third of its voters and 13 seats.

Although faltering late in the recent campaign—polls as late as two weeks before election day indicated as much as 22 percent of the electorate would vote for Party of Progress candidates—it still quadrupled its share of the 1985 popular vote, increasing its representation in the 165-member Storting from 2 to 22 seats.

The rise of the Party of Progress and smaller but impressive gains by the Socialist Left on the other end of the spectrum leaves the country's parliament in political chaos. "It's difficult to see how anyone can rule in this situation," says Nilsson.

Hagen, who openly calls for the dismantling of the welfare state, espouses a "libertarian" economic philosophy, drawing heavily on conservative think tanks in Great Britain and America. According to Tor Mikkelsen, Hagen's right-hand man and a newly elected Storting representative, the party sees itself "as part of the international conservative movement."

On the surface, at least, the Party of Progress platform does read like a checklist for the Thatcher and Reagan revolutions. Among other things, Hagen calls for deep cuts in social

spending and taxes, the privatizing of health care, the divestiture of state holdings in natural gas and oil projects, the elimination of subsidies to unprofitable industries and even the introduction of education "vouchers" to parents. But his critics maintain that Hagen has more of a "grab bag" approach to policy than any clearly defined agenda. "He quotes everybody. He even quotes himself," says Conservative Party political adviser Jan Pedersen.

While many economists and other non-socialist politicians sympathize with some of his proposals, the consensus is that the radical shifts he calls for—such as the immediate elimination of agricultural subsidies—would be catastrophic if implemented.

"He's a good amateur economist," says the chief economist of one of Norway's major banks, "but his specific proposals are out of touch with reality."

If Hagen is lambasted for what might be called the Norwegian version of voodoo economics, he is more harshly attacked for what his detractors say are his polarizing effects on society. He is widely seen as playing the weaker elements of society against each other—young struggling families against single mothers and the unemployed against Third World immigrants—to the financial benefit of the well-to-do. In the view of one voter: "The losers in Hagen's society can just go to hell. That's his philosophy in a nutshell."

Hagen's highly visible stand against immigration (particularly in a situation where personal assaults on minorities and bombings of refugee centers and immigrant-owned businesses have started occurring with alarming frequency) has brought particularly strong denunciation.

He denies charges of racism, saying his emigration policy is strictly a matter of sound economics. But critics say Hagen has successfully harnessed a not-so-latent racism lying under the surface calm of Norwegian society. And his broadsides against big government, lazy bureaucrats and welfare cheats have also played well with some voters.

While the comparisons to Adolf Hitler and France's Le Pen made by ordinary voters are perhaps to be expected, the visceral distaste and distrust for Hagen expressed by seasoned politicians is more striking.

"He scares me," says a highly placed official of a major party. "If I weren't sitting here in a rather responsible position, I'd call him a fascist. Privately, I do."

Lawrence O'Connor writes about Northern Europe from his base in Norway.

13

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C A L E N D A R

NEW YORK

September 26-29

THE NEW YORK MARXIST SCHOOL TUESDAY, Sept. 26 - Ecology, Economics and North/South Solidarity; Yanique Joseph and Michael Renner; 6 p.m.
WEDNESDAY, Sept. 27 - Which Way for the Black Struggle: Self-Determination or Electoral Integration?; Lloyd D'Aguilar, Ahmed Obafemi, Leonora Falani, Omowale Clay and Jim Houghton; 7:30 p.m.
THURSDAY, Sept. 28 - Right to Life? Eleanor Bader, 8 p.m.
FRIDAY, Sept. 29 - Class Transformations and Socialist Transitions, Richard Wolff and Stephen Resnick, 8 p.m.
All events take place at the Brecht Forum, 79 Leonard St. (five blocks below Canal, between Church and Broadway). Unless otherwise listed, admission is \$5. For information call (212) 941-0332. Classes begin October 2.

CHICAGO

October 6-8

"Palestinian Statehood: Justice, Liberation and Democracy." The Palestine Human Rights Campaign urges you to join us in Chicago the weekend of October 6-8 for our 12th annual conference. Featured speakers will include: Faisal Hussein, Israel Shakah, Nabil Sha'ath and Philip Klutznick, among many others. For more information, contact PHRC at 220 S. State, #1308, Chicago, IL 60604, (312) 987-1830.

October 14

GREENPEACE is hosting a rally to call attention to Japan's impending hunt of 400 whales in the Antarctic. The organization is calling on the U.S. government to utilize the Pelly Amendment to sanction Japan for its illegitimate "research" whaling. The rally will be held at 1:00 p.m. in Daley Plaza, Washington and Dearborn streets. A life-sized "petition whale" will be signed by participants at the rally and delivered to the prime minister of Japan by Greenpeace. For more information, contact Lee Mittermann, Ocean Ecology Campaigner, Greenpeace Great Lakes (312)666-3305.

October 16

The first Sidney Hillman Memorial Lecture will take place at 7:30 p.m. in Room 324 (Illinois Room), Chicago Circle Center, University of Illinois at Chicago, 710 S. Halsted. Esther Peterson (New Deal activist, consumerist and ACTWU staffer) is the featured speaker. For information call (312) 996-2623. Funded by Illinois Humanities Council, ACTWU-

Midwest and the Jewish Labor Committee.

TAHLEQUAH, OK

October 4-7

The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma presents a symposium: "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Thoughts for a New Generation," at the Western Hills Guest Ranch. Featured speakers include Molly Yard, Dr. Ruth Westheimer, Chief Wilma Mankiller, Judge Lisa Richette, Dr. Rayna Green, Joy Harjo and Erin Moriarty. Topics include women and health, education, professional development, spirituality, family and an historical perspective on the contributions of women. The symposium will allow rural and Midwestern women, both Indian and non-Indian, the chance to participate in a national women's conference within their own region. Conference cost is \$85, includes all sessions and four meals. Special room rates, tours and activities are also offered. For more information contact Cherokee Nation, (918) 456-0671, Ext. 416 or 248.

INDIANA, PA

October 18-20

IUP Symposium, "Searching for New Horizons: The University at the Gateway of the 21st Century." Speakers include Nathan Glazer, Stanley Aronowitz, Bernard Harleston, Benjamin Bowser and Bernice Sandler. Contact: Irwin Marcus, History Department, IUP, Indiana, PA 15705 (412) 357-2237 or -2284.

WASHINGTON, DC

Fall 1989

The Washington School Fall Program of Politics, Ideas and Culture. Evening Courses beginning October 11: Drug Policy and the Latin American Cocaine Industry, Safeguarding Abortion Politics, What's Wrong With This Picture? The Black Character in Mainstream Film, Internationalism Today. Special Events: October 27: Poet, essayist and playwright June Jordan; November 30: Philosopher of education Henry Giroux; December 15: Theologian and social critic Cornel West. The Continuing Education Project of The Institute for Policy Studies, 1601 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202)234-9382.

ANN ARBOR, MI

October 4

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THE ERRODING MIDDLE GROUND



Director Euzhan Palcy



Zakes Mokae and Donald Sutherland in
A Dry White Season

A Dry White Season Directed by Euzhan Palcy *Romero* Directed by John D. Hancock

By Pat Aufderheide

IN SOME POLITICAL SITUATIONS THERE IS NO MIDDLE ground, and in every political crisis there is a moment of choice that reveals that what was once the middle ground is now an area of complicity.

To live in an America on the verge of the '90s is to live in a country where the notion that there is always a middle ground—a safe haven from ugly choices—is a virtual religious belief, a commitment to unknowing at all costs. That belief is both the guarantor of temporary quietude and the threat to long-range viability—not of the world we know, which in any case cannot continue as it is, but of any future we may be able to bequeath. There are, of course, segments of the society that know and carry the scars of knowledge. But the white taxpaying majority armors itself protectively against pain and change.

To live in South Africa or El Salvador is to experience the moment of choice. Both are areas of the world in which the middle ground has been ground to dust, and in which the very act of survival entails taking sides.

Ends justify the middle: Two recent films confront the challenge of speaking to an audience committed to the middle ground, about people who have been driven to decisions. Both *A Dry White Season*, by Martinican filmmaker Euzhan Palcy from South African novelist Andre Brink's novel (which was banned in South Africa), and *Romero*, made by the Paulist fathers about the life of Archbishop Oscar Romero, tackle subjects that stretch the conventions of entertainment features.

Both lean heavily on traditional Hollywood storytelling in an attempt to reach a broad audience normally unsympathetic to "political" or "message" films. Both use as pro-

tagonists people who move from a position of self-enforced naiveté to inevitable confrontation with the powers that be.

But their approaches differ dramatically. *A Dry White Season* pivots on the psychological conflicts of a former naïf's choice for justice. At stake is not just job and family but respect for the person one once was—that naïve soul who accepted the cost of unknowing. *Romero* carefully skirts the confrontation with self, the crucial moments of self-doubt and the collapse of understanding the world as it once was, putting up a religious fence around the decisions of Archbishop Romero.

Justice and law: *A Dry White Season* tells the story of a white schoolteacher, Ben du Toit (Donald Sutherland), whose black gardener Gordon (Winston Ntshona) is murdered after he tries to investigate the murder of his young son during the Soweto uprising in 1976. At first Ben murmurs, "There is nothing to be done." But his interested innocence is finally shattered when he sees his gardener's torture-scarred body, and he passionately—and innocently—pursues "the truth" by seeking "justice to the full extent of the law."

Human rights lawyer Ian McKenzie (Marlon Brando) knows better—"The law and justice are distant cousins, and in South Africa I'm afraid they are not on speaking terms at all." (Brando's performance here makes you sad for what we've missed over the years from him. His charisma is poured into the part, and he creates a magnificently rich character whose cynicism never conquers his passion.) Nevertheless, McKenzie takes the case, if only to prove his point.

The schoolteacher doggedly pursues the case, which only brings out the most vicious in the South African police—and in his wife and daughter, who regard him a traitor. He is supported with reservations by Stanley, a black activist (Zakes Mokae) who regularly mocks his innocence and pretensions, and by



Raul Julia as *Romero*

A Dry White Season
and *Romero*: the
difficulties of walking
the line while the
earth shifts below.

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